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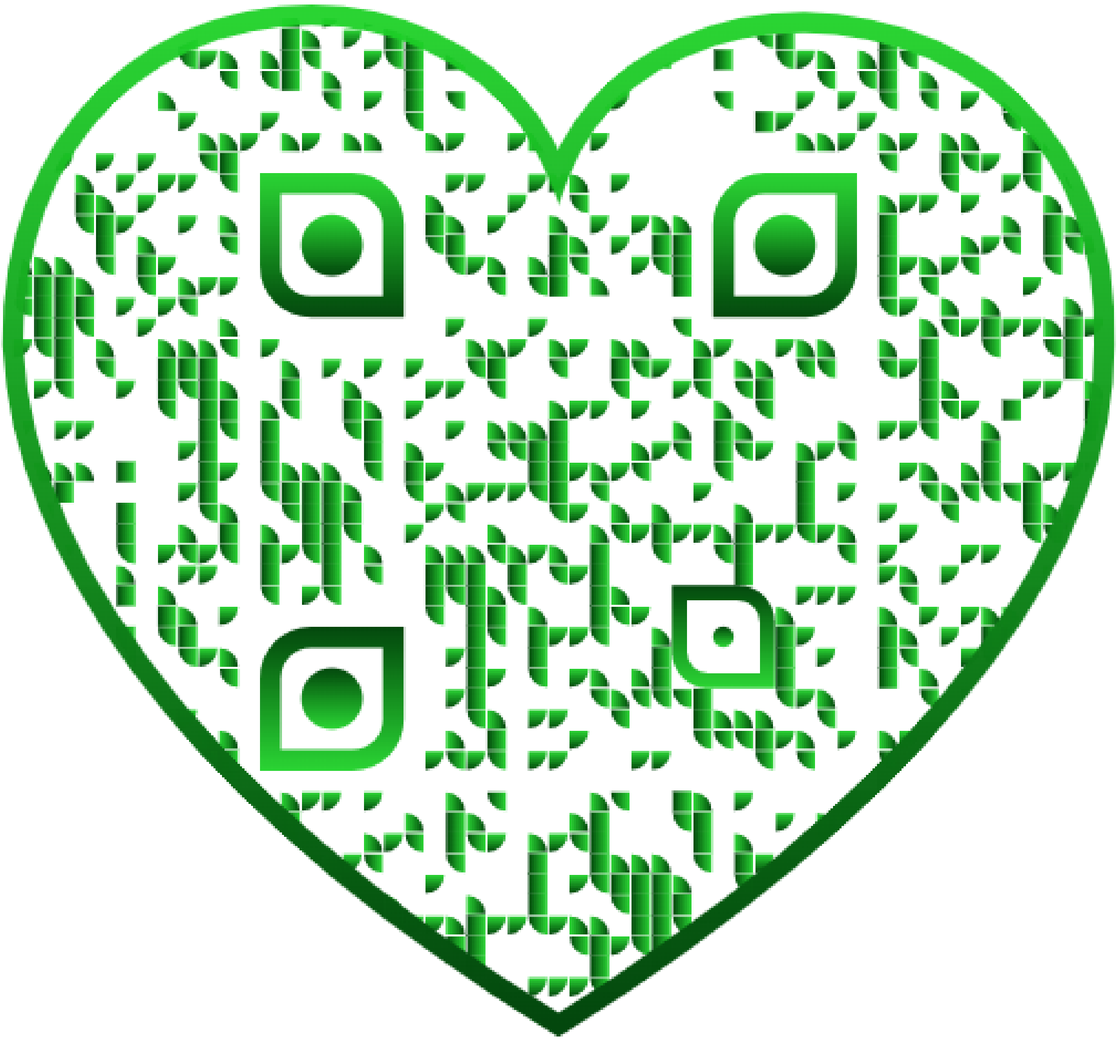

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December 2025

Vintage issue

ON THE COVER

18 Classic Christmas cookies Irresistible gingerbread, biscotti, florentines, pfeffernüsse and more.

36 Make retro ribs and fish pie with Matt Moran Our new recipe series starts here.

50 Grow cottage garden heritage blooms

66 Geneva's shelf display

74 Timeless festive feasts Dine on a roast with all the trimmings and chocolate yule log.

104 Flower embroidery

142 BHG recipes through the years We're gonna party like it's 1978!

158 Vintage cake decorating Your step-by-step guide to a truly show-stopping celebration cake.

FOOD

18 Classic cookies Bake up a boxful of goodies from gingerbread biscuits and white Christmas bars to nutty chocolate-dipped treats.

32 Fanciful twists Christmas biscuits to slice and bake.

36 Taking stock Chef Matt Moran dishes up food memories and must-try recipes.

74 A vintage feast Relive the golden age of entertaining with a mid-century inspired menu.

88 Punch it up! Fabulous punch recipes for the party season.

92 Cooking with Colin & Clarissa Flavour-packed recipes you'll want to put on repeat.

102 Dinner for one Sweet & sour pork for when you're dining solo.

142 Nostalgia on a plate We peek back at some forgotten gems from the BHG archives.

150 Family favourites Foodie memories and Reta's boiled fruitcake recipe (it's a keeper!).

154 Better cooking

158 Retro revival Recreate Patti Chimkire's spectacular Retro Love cake.

GARDENING

50 True romance Tips for a rose-filled cottage garden.

Cover photography Tim Roberts; styling Lucy Busuttil

114 Growing memories with Graham Your garden can be history in the making!
120 Untamed beauty Learn the secrets of rewilding with garden design expert Tim Pilgrim.
172 Leafing through history Journey back through the decades revisiting indoor plant trends.
180 In your garden What to plant when and where.
182 Moon guide with Milton Black
184 Better gardening

INTERIORS

58 Vintage Whether you're drawn to cool retro-modern or warm antique decor styles, we'll show you how to curate your ideal space.
72 Better decorating
156 Cool, calm and collected Our top 10 buys for laid-back summer entertaining.

DIY & CRAFT

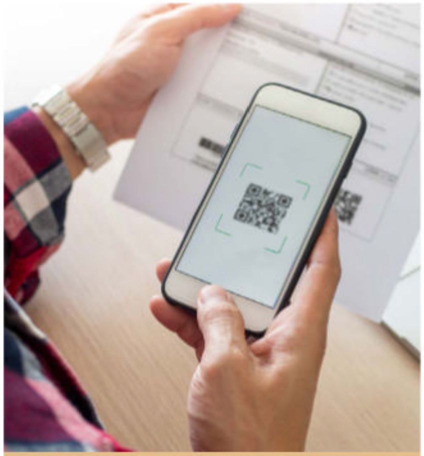
66 Top shelf Geneva's vintage glassware collection has a new home! Find out how to build your own wooden display shelf.
70 Picture perfect Go op-shopping for photo frames and vintage fabric, then upcycle them to make creative wall decor.
104 It's all in the details How textile artist Fleur Woods captures nature's beauty stitch by stitch.
138 Box of tricks with Adam Build a sturdy storage box inspired by Japanese woodcraft.

TRAVEL

130 Travel through time Stepping inside a historic house connects you to the past. Visit these eight Aussie wonders.

REGULAR FEATURES

10 Editor's letter
11 Editor's picks
14 Contributors
16 Write to us! Share your stories.
128 Better pets We dig up some popular pet names of yesteryear.
170 Better books
186 Better finance
188 Better stockists
188 Privacy notice
194 Better experiences



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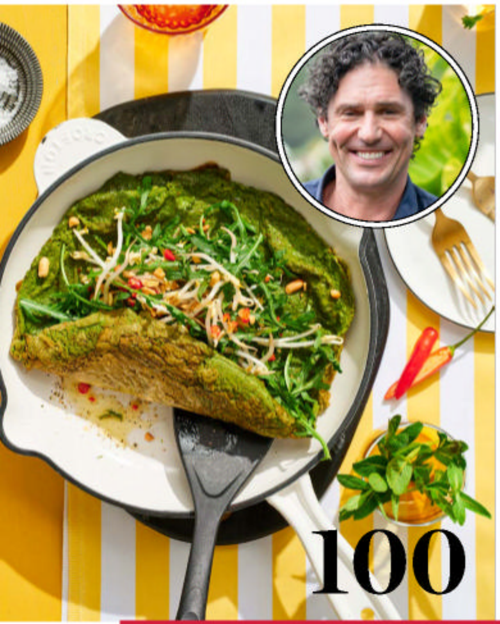
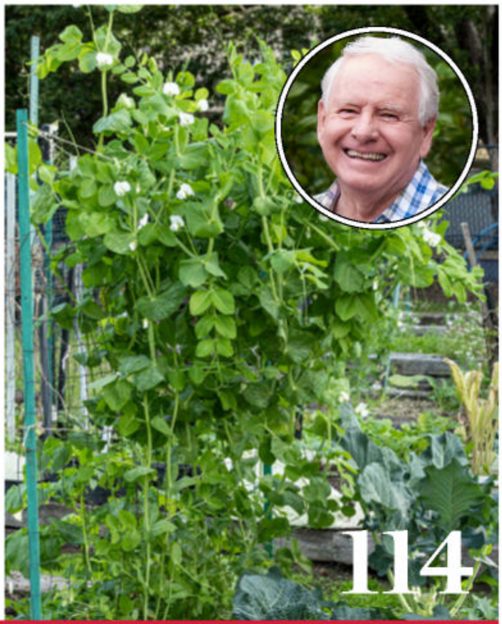




FOOD

92 **Clarissa Feildel** celebrates her South-East Asian heritage with delicious dishes that are perfect for the party season. Serve up her Thai beef salad, Indonesian corn fritters and fusion-style crispy chicken wings with smashed cucumber and a spicy sauce.

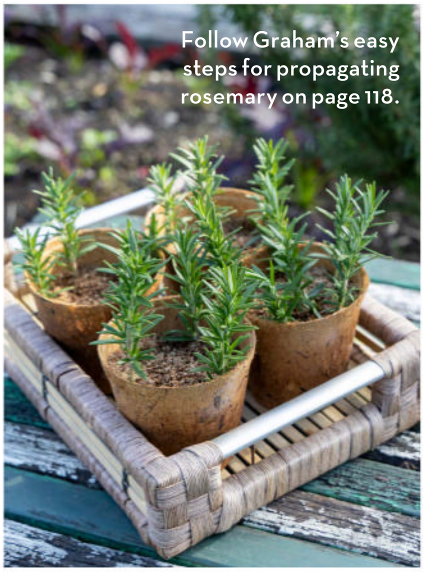
98 **Colin Fassnidge** rustles up a rustic shredded chicken terrine that's a great starter for any festive menu. Plus, he's cracked the secret to a smashing dish of spiced green eggs, and a luscious chocolate mousse.

GARDENING

114 **Graham Ross** reminisces about sowing seeds at his father's side and nurturing the skills he now passes on to his grandchildren.

DIY & BUILDING

138 **Adam Dovile** shows how to build your own Japanese-style wooden toolbox with a lockable lid.



Follow Graham's easy steps for propagating rosemary on page 118.

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Heirlooms & *horizons*

You might be wondering why we chose vintage as the theme for this issue. The answer is layered, much like the meaning of the word 'vintage'. With the festive season on the horizon, it felt like the perfect time to lean into nostalgia by celebrating heritage, heirlooms, and the traditions that connect us across generations.

We delved into what classifies as vintage style, meanings behind iconic family recipes, or trends in plants, decor and more. This issue isn't about being stuck in the past, or repeating the same old worn record. It's more about recognising and marking our connection to the past, and shaping what our future looks like with all the wisdom and sentiment that's come before.

Better Homes and Gardens as a brand has a long history. It was born more than 100 years ago in Iowa, first as *Fruit, Garden and Home* before taking on the name you know today. It's been printing in Australia since 1978, and is a brand that has become woven into our everyday lives.

When I tell people (proudly) I work on BHG, I often hear, "I grew up watching that show!" or "I always read my Mum's magazine growing up." It's a privilege to hold such a treasured place in so many lives, and we never take that for granted.

Much of what guides our content comes from you. Your stories, insights, loves and challenges inspire what we do every day.

So, on that note, thank you for your support, and being a part of this journey. We recognise our past together, and look forward to being part of this community into the future.

Our hope is simple: to continue to spark creativity and joy in every home and garden, for this season, and for many more to come.

Megan

Megan Osborne
Editor

WE'RE LOVING

Tim Pilgrim's tips on how to rewild your garden are inspirational (page 120). He allows nature to take its course so it nourishes the earth and all who live on it.

JENNY DILLON
Garden editor

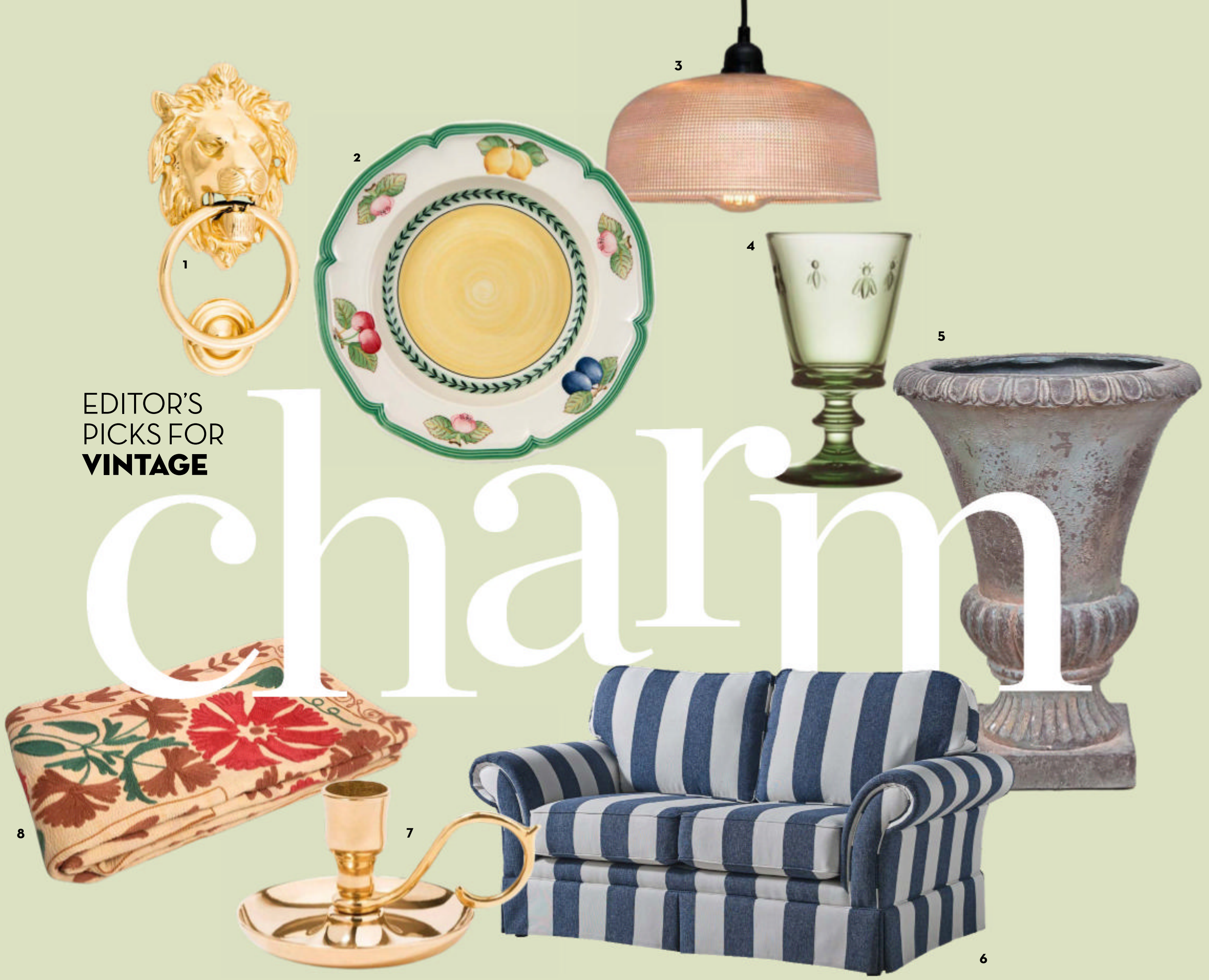
I'm going to try making Matt Moran's fish pie recipe (page 40). Those prawns and fish sitting in my freezer will taste seriously good! (And the pastry's frozen, too.)

JO MCKINNON
Chief sub-editor

I loved seeing archive recipes from BHG come to life this issue in "Nostalgia on a Plate" (page 142). It shows you how much food trends change over the decades.

SOPHIE AL-BASSAM
Managing editor

EDITOR'S PICKS FOR **VINTAGE** charm



My home is filled with pieces that make me genuinely happy – a friend once called it "eclectic bohemian". There's colour, plants and a mix of styles from Art Nouveau and Art Deco through to French farmhouse. But here are a few things still on my wishlist!

1. Lion's head door knocker from Schots Emporium, $114. Tell your guests your home has character before they've even walked in the door.

2. Villeroy & Boch French Garden Fleurence large deep plate from Peter's of Kensington, $65. Villeroy & Boch has a history dating back to a small (now French) village in Lorraine in 1748. These very cute, very French-inspired plates bring an ultimate rustic vegie patch charm.

3. Crosshatch glass pendant light from Fat Shack Vintage, from $115. Available in three colours and two sizes, this Holophane glass style was popular in the early 1900s. The texture in the glass diffuses light to create a gentle glow.

4. La Rochere Bee wine glass in olive from Peter's of Kensington, $93 for six. These glasses add a touch of elegance to your table setting. Or you can collect the whole Bee set, including tumblers short and tall.

5. Chartwell Home Ararat pedestal planter from Temple & Webster, $189.99. A pedestal planter is a great way to bring height to your garden and focus to some lovely flowers. This classic style has just enough ornamentation to look vintage without outshining your plants.

6. Baron two-seater fabric sofa from Harvey Norman, $1899. Bring back coastal chic with this elevated nod to the '90s. This sofa also comes with a matching solid blue armchair to complete the look.

7. Trudon Dutch candlestick in gold from Myer, $149. Dine in classic style with this gorgeous gold candlestick holder. Its simple design means it pretty much goes with any style of decor.

8. Suzani vintage Kantha throw from Love After Love, $360. A Kantha throw is a handstitched textile from India or Bangladesh. These vintage options are delicately embroidered and have that never-mass-market feel. ■

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Chock-full of spice and everything nice! Bake up this feast of traditional Christmas treats with recipes from page 18.

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Meet the creative minds shaping this issue with insights and inspo for everyone!

It's all in the DETAILS

◀ FLEUR WOODS

Artist

Fleur Woods is a contemporary fibre artist based in New Zealand. In her book *The Untamed Thread*, she shares her love of all things colour, texture, flora and textile. Read an extract from the book on page 104 – it's bursting with inspiration to help you bring more creativity into your days.

ISMAT AWAN ▶

Recipe developer

Ismat Awan trained at Le Cordon Bleu in Sydney and Paris and has worked in celebrated kitchens including Pierre Hermé in Paris and Rockpool on George in Sydney. Now a creative food consultant and recipe developer, she draws on her global experiences to bring a love of spice and playful twists to family favourites. This month, Ismat made traditional French, German and Italian treats for our Christmas baking feature on page 18.

CLASSIC COOKIES

▲ JOHN RAE

DIY researcher

John Rae has been a DIY researcher for *Better Homes and Gardens* TV for more than 20 years. A cabinet-maker by trade, John has tackled everything from billycarts and skateboard ramps to room makeovers during his time on the show. His favourite part of the job is inspiring others to try some DIY and carpentry themselves. See his clever toolbox project on page 138.

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WITH ADAM

> “THE DIY JAPANESE TOOLBOX IS VERY COOL. IT'S USEFUL, EASY AND CHEAP TO BUILD – A PERFECT FIT FOR BHG.”
>
> **JOHN RAE**

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Letter of the month

I have always enjoyed reading BHG, as my mum did. I still have some dating back to 1991. When I was a shearer's cook, I'd buy my copies of BHG when working in Bourke or Hay or Ivanhoe, and then back home in Crookwell.

When planning Christmas or any other occasion, I go through my BHG. I have tags on pages like the 2018 issue tray bake stuffing and a cheesecake from 2021. I could go on and on! I have a list for all sorts of occasions, too. I am going to try Colin's recipes from the April 2025 issue.

Thank you for many years of inspiration and enjoyment. I'm looking forward to more of your wonderful magazine. – ***Mary***

CONGRATULATIONS

We're so glad you've enjoyed BHG for so long, Mary! We hope you continue to enjoy future issues, perhaps while picnicking with your new Waverley Mills Traditional Picnic Rug.

Show winner

While visiting the Royal Adelaide Show recently, I purchased the *Better Homes and Gardens* showbag with three magazines, including the October issue of BHG. As a keen environmentalist who has felt some climate anxiety in trying to do the right thing by our planet, I was blown away by all the positive ideas in the magazine. I have dog-eared a number of pages to come back to, and for the first time I read the magazine cover to cover excitedly. Also, I made the roast beetroot tart - yum! Thank you!

– ***Alice***

Grateful gardener

I've been a subscriber to BHG for years and always look forward to a good read. Each magazine provides me with some new tip, reno idea or a taste sensation. But September was special! The September edition read like it was themed, from cover to cover, with everything for the change of season and the keen gardener. Absolutely loved it. There was not one article that I did not devour. More please!

– ***Cherie***

A sister's love

I live in Adelaide and have recently returned from South Africa where I stayed for two months with my sister as she dealt with her diagnosis of breast cancer and chemo treatments. I am returning soon to help my sister and I am taking the September 2025 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* with me. There are excellent recipes and projects in the magazine I can do with her two granddaughters during the October school holidays. The 12-year-old, Jasmine, loves to bake and she will be excited by the recipes. And the 10-year-old, Saffron, is very creative and talented and is an excellent knitter. The other projects in the magazine will be a good challenge for her. Thank you for an excellent magazine.

– ***Jennifer***

Pure poetry

There once was a family who lived
on a farm,
Where all of her lovely plants often
came to harm.
An unexpected and tragic event
forced a move to the city,
They were hopeful to have a garden that
would be oh so pretty.

The new home was overrun with
blackberries and trees that had
gone rogue.
Time to consult the experts in
getting the yard in shape,
Years of collecting the clippings – surely
that content will fix this landscape.
Out come the folders filled to the brim,
After days of reading and research the
task seemed less grim.
So it begins – the weeding, tree trimming
and out with the blackberries.

Any home is a perpetual work in
progress,
Now we are at a point where there is less
stress and mess.
Garden guidance, projects and crafts
to make,
Not to mention delicious meals, slices,
biscuits and don't forget the cake!

Thank you to BHG for all of the wonderful articles and entertainment that you bring to us!

– ***Simone***

Prices are approximate and a guide only.

FOOD

QUICK FANCY GOAT'S CHEESE
Recipe on page 22

EASY FOCACCIA BREAD WITH FLOWER ART
Recipe on page 23

fresh as a daisy

Celebrate spring with delicious recipes inspired by the season's divine kaleidoscope of flowers.

Photography TIM ROBERTS *Styling* LUCY BUSUTTIL *Recipes* JESSICA BROOK AND SARAH MURPHY

Designer blooms

Oh my goodness… I have just finished my shopping, which of course included the September issue of *Better Homes and Gardens*.

I have been reading this informative magazine forever. This issue is among one of the most colourful I have ever read. I don't know where to begin. I feel the immediate need to bake the focaccia – it looks so inviting. Then, decorating the biscuits – they are so pretty and colourful.

Throughout the issue, the description of the many flowers and their meaning is just beautiful. The designer blooms and the stages of flower arranging are mesmerising. Wallpaper florals and style, and "States of Origin" – the list goes on.

I have a very small garden and am a mediocre cook, but I'll try some of the many ideas your magazine produces. Thank you for so much joy and colour.
– ***Wanda***

Colour, always!

Just the other day, a friend and I were discussing how good the magazine has always been for pure colourfulness; never following the boring path of grey-everything that seems to have obsessed all the other home decor mags. It's so cheering to see the wonderful pages filled with colour, always!
– ***Charmain***

Mum, Mum's mum and me

My shopping trolley full. I'm waiting at the checkout, *Better Homes and Gardens* on top of the pile. I'm looking forward to glancing through it and enjoying a coffee when I get home. I'll set it aside then and read it later from cover to cover.

My mum always had a magazine on hand, well used. It may have been the *Women's Weekly, Woman's Day* or later BHG. My mum knitted, crocheted, sewed and quilted. She was a spinner and a weaver, made felt toys and macramé pot hangers, and replaced cane seats on chairs. Many of these skills were learned from these magazines.

I inherited many of the magazines but not so many of the skills! But BHG still has something new in the pages each month.

My granny, born in the 19th century and having migrated from the UK, found her magazines were a lifeline to the familiar things of home. She led a simple life, was the breadwinner of the family, and sewed canvas awnings, blinds and curtains for a local draper.

All our clothes were made by Granny or Mum. Granny was up at 6am and in bed by 10pm, after a glass of medicinal stout. My mum and my mum's mum were stoic and resilient, and they had great life skills and time management skills.
– ***Patricia***

UP FOR GRABS
FOR READERS

Ninja SLUSHi Professional Frozen Drink Maker

VALUED AT $499.99

Our favourite letter will receive this Ninja SLUSHi – the easiest way to make frozen drinks at home, just in time for summer entertaining!

ENTRY PERIOD
Oct 24–Nov 20, 2025

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LAST MONTH

We'll be announcing who won the Tefal Dual Easy Fry XXXL 11L Air Fryer in our Christmas issue.

CLASSIC COOKIES

Fill the kitchen with the sweet aromas of nostalgic bickies for the festive season.

Photography TIM ROBERTS *Styling* LUCY BUSUTTIL *Recipes* ISMAT AWAN & SARAH MURPHY

SNOWFLAKE RASPBERRY ROSE LINZER BISCUITS

Recipe on page 28

CHOCOLATE CRINKLE COOKIES
Recipe on page 28

APRICOT AND PEACH WHITE CHRISTMAS
Recipe on page 28

FESTIVE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES
Recipe on page 30

CLASSIC FLORENTINES
Recipe on page 30

LEMON AND PISTACHIO BISCOTTI

Recipe on page 31

Nothing says Christmas quite like the smell of baking filling the house, whether it's buttery shortbread or something rich and chocolatey. For me, it's always gingerbread – there's something about that delicate spiced aroma that feels instantly festive. I put my little Christmas tree up on December 1 every year and part of my tradition is to have gingerbread bickies baking in the oven to make my unit smell delicious (plus a daggy Christmas movie on TV). It's the perfect backdrop while I wrangle my tree into shape and put up my decorations.

One of the things I've always loved about gingerbread is decorating. If you're a beginner you can pipe for fun, or if you want to spend time delicately creating patterns, you can do that, too!

This gingerbread dough couldn't be easier. A quick chill in the fridge helps it firm up before rolling and cutting. You can use whatever cutters you have at home, or use a small sharp knife to cut out shapes freehand.

My favourite gingerbread shape has to be cute little mini house biscuits – it's like having a gingerbread house without all the fiddly building! And if you're looking for lovely sharp edges on your shapes, once the biscuits have cooled, lightly run a microplane along the sides. Just a couple of strokes is all it takes to give you neat, crisp lines.

Whether you're baking to create gifts from the kitchen, decorating with kids, or making a batch for yourself to enjoy with a cuppa during the busy holiday season, these bickies will become your favourite, too.

SARAH'S GINGERBREAD

Preparation time 20 mins plus 30 mins chilling
Cooking time 15 mins
Makes 12

125g unsalted butter, softened
½ cup caster sugar
1 egg yolk
2 cups plain flour
3 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon bicarbonate soda
¼ cup golden syrup, warmed slightly
90g boiled lollies, separated into colours, crushed

ICING

1 egg white
1½ cups pure icing sugar, sifted
Few drops lemon juice

STEP 1 In a bowl, using an electric mixer, beat butter and sugar until creamy. Add egg yolk and beat well.
STEP 2 Sift the flour, ginger and bicarbonate soda into a bowl. Fold into butter mixture with golden syrup until a dough forms. Shape into a flat round. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or until firm enough to roll.
STEP 3 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Lightly grease and line two baking trays with baking paper.
STEP 4 Roll out dough between two sheets of baking paper until 0.5cm thick. Cut out three 9cm stars, then cut out 4cm stars within each star (to form stained glass). Cut out 10cm angels, gingerbread men and houses. Transfer to the prepared trays.
STEP 5 Arrange crushed boiled lollies in centre of stars, three-quarters full. Bake for 10–12 minutes, until biscuits are pale golden. Cool completely on trays.
STEP 6 For icing, in a medium bowl, whisk egg white until frothy. Add icing sugar, a spoonful at a time, stirring well after each addition, until it is a thick piping consistency. Mix in lemon juice.
STEP 7 Transfer icing to a piping bag fitted with a small plain nozzle. Decorate cookies and put aside to set.

SARAH'S GINGERBREAD
Recipe opposite

SNOWFLAKE RASPBERRY ROSE LINZER BISCUITS

Preparation time 40 mins plus 15 mins chilling
Cooking time 30 mins
Makes 24

250g unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup pure icing sugar, sifted, plus extra to dust
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2¼ cups plain flour
¾ cup almond meal
½ teaspoon salt

RASPBERRY JAM
2 cups firmly packed frozen raspberries
¾ cup caster sugar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1½ teaspoons rosewater

STEP 1 For the jam, combine the raspberries, sugar and lemon juice in a small saucepan on medium heat. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 12–14 minutes, until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in rosewater. Set aside to cool completely. Transfer to a container and refrigerate until needed.
STEP 2 Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter and icing sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Mix in vanilla. Fold in flour, almond meal and salt. Turn out onto a clean surface and form a dough. Divide in half. Flatten into two discs. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.
STEP 3 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line two oven trays with baking paper. On a lightly floured surface or between two pieces of baking paper, roll out one piece of dough at a time until 0.5cm thick. Cut 9cm snowflake shapes from the dough and arrange on the lined trays. Use a 4.5cm snowflake cutter to cut shapes from the middle of half the biscuits (these will become the top of your biscuit sandwiches).
STEP 4 Bake for 12–14 minutes or until pale golden, swapping tray positions halfway through baking to ensure even baking. Let biscuits cool on trays for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
STEP 5 To assemble, spoon about ½ teaspoon of cooled jam onto the full biscuits. Generously dust the cut biscuits with icing sugar, then carefully place on the jam-topped biscuits to sandwich together.

COOK'S TIPS

- Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days (filled biscuits will soften slightly).
- Store leftover jam in the fridge for up to 1 month.

CHOCOLATE CRINKLE COOKIES

Preparation time 40 mins plus 30 mins chilling
Cooking time 15 mins
Makes 20

200g dark chocolate, chopped
100g unsalted butter, chopped
1 cup brown sugar
2 free-range eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1¼ cups plain flour
¼ cup cocoa powder
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup pure icing sugar, sifted

COATING
150g white chocolate, melted
3 tablespoons crushed candy canes

STEP 1 Put dark chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of barely simmering water. Stir occasionally until melted and smooth. Remove from heat. Cool slightly.
STEP 2 Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat sugar, eggs and vanilla in a large bowl until thick and pale. Stir in cooled chocolate mixture until combined.
STEP 3 Sift over flour, cocoa, baking powder and salt. Fold to combine. Turn out onto a floured surface and bring dough together. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
STEP 4 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced and line two trays with baking paper. Put icing sugar in a small bowl. Roll heaped tablespoons of dough into balls, then add to icing sugar and toss to coat completely. Arrange on prepared trays about 3cm apart. Press down on tops to slightly flatten.
STEP 5 Bake for 12–14 minutes, swapping tray positions halfway during cooking to ensure even baking. Let cool on trays for 10 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.
STEP 6 In a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of gently simmering water, melt white chocolate until smooth. Remove from heat. One at a time, dip cookies halfway into the chocolate and put back onto lined trays. Immediately sprinkle tops with crushed candy cane. Set aside until chocolate sets.

COOK'S TIPS

- Store the cookies in an airtight container for up to 5 days if dipped or up to 1 week if undipped.
- If you prefer, swap the white chocolate for milk or dark chocolate.

APRICOT AND PEACH WHITE CHRISTMAS

Preparation time 15 mins plus 1 hour chilling
Cooking time 5 mins
Makes 10

450g white chocolate, chopped
5 cups rice bubbles
½ cup dried apricots, finely chopped
½ cup dried peaches, finely chopped

PFEFFERNÜSSE
Recipe on page 31

¼ cup dried cranberries, chopped
¼ cup pistachios, roughly chopped
1 cup shredded coconut
¼ cup full-cream milk powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Edible gold leaf, to decorate

STEP 1 Line a 20cm x 30cm x 5cm lamington pan with baking paper, allowing paper to overhang the sides.
STEP 2 Melt chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water, or in a heatproof bowl in the microwave (short bursts of 30 seconds at a time), stirring often, until completely melted and smooth.
STEP 3 In a large bowl, put rice bubbles, chopped dried apricots, peaches, cranberries, pistachios, shredded coconut and milk powder. Mix until well combined.
STEP 4 Pour melted white chocolate and vanilla extract into rice bubble mixture. Using a spatula, fold everything together until well coated and combined.
STEP 5 Transfer mixture into lined pan. Press firmly and evenly into pan with the back of a spoon to compact and smooth. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or until completely set and firm.
STEP 6 Decorate with gold leaf, then cut into rectangular bars.

COOK'S TIPS

- Using milk powder gives extra richness and creates that classic creamy white Christmas texture without having to use copha.
- Gold leaf adds elegant festive sparkle without overpowering the natural colours of the dried stone fruit and pistachios.

FESTIVE CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Preparation time 15 mins plus 15 mins chilling
Cooking time 30 mins
Makes 30

250g milk arrowroot or Marie biscuits, crushed
395g can sweetened condensed milk
¼ cup cocoa powder
1 cup desiccated coconut
100g dark chocolate, melted
30 skinless hazelnuts or macadamias, roasted

COATING
225g bag milk or dark chocolate melts
¼ cup white chocolate melts, melted
3 candy canes, crushed

STEP 1 In a large bowl, mix crushed biscuits, condensed milk, cocoa, coconut and melted chocolate.
STEP 2 Line a tray with baking paper. Using 1 tablespoon of mixture at a time, flatten slightly with your hands. Put a hazelnut or macadamia in the middle, then form mixture around the nut to create a ball. Put on the prepared tray. Refrigerate for 15 minutes.
STEP 3 Put a wire rack over a tray. In a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water, melt chocolate until smooth. Using two forks, dip truffles, one at a time, in chocolate, gently shaking off excess. Transfer to the rack (see tip). Immediately sprinkle with crushed candy canes, if using, or set aside to set, then drizzle with white chocolate. Refrigerate until firm.

COOK'S TIP

After coating truffles, put onto a wire rack to set – this allows excess chocolate to drip on the tray below.

CLASSIC FLORENTINES

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 15 mins
Makes 12

50g unsalted butter
¼ cup brown sugar
2 tablespoons golden syrup
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup cornflakes, slightly crushed
⅓ cup flaked almonds
¼ cup glacé cherries, chopped
1 tablespoon finely grated orange zest
150g dark chocolate

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Grease two six-hole Texas muffin pans and line with two 2cm x 10cm strips of baking paper. In a small saucepan on medium-low heat, melt butter, sugar and golden syrup until bubbling. Simmer for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla.
STEP 2 Add cornflakes, almonds, cherries and orange zest. Mix well to coat everything evenly.
STEP 3 Spoon a heaped tablespoon of mixture into each muffin hole (don't worry if the mixture doesn't cover the base – it will spread during baking).
STEP 4 Bake for 10–12 minutes or until golden and bubbling. Remove from

Food preparation Ismat Awan, Sarah Murphy

oven and set aside for 5 minutes to cool slightly.

STEP 5 Line a baking tray with baking paper. Working quickly, remove florentines from pan, using the strips of baking paper to pull them out. Carefully remove the strips of baking paper and put florentines on prepared tray. Set aside to cool completely.

STEP 6 In a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water, melt chocolate until smooth. Using a pastry brush or the back of a spoon, coat the flat base of each florentine in chocolate. Use a fork to create that signature wavy design on each florentine. Put chocolate-side up on lined tray. Refrigerate for 30 minutes, until chocolate sets.

LEMON AND PISTACHIO BISCOTTI

Preparation time 15 mins
Cooking time 1 hour 5 mins
Makes 25

100g unsalted butter, at room temperature
¾ cup caster sugar
2 free-range eggs
2¼ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
1 teaspoon cardamom powder
¾ cup pistachio kernels (see Cook's Tip)
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten

COATING

150g white chocolate melts
2 tablespoons finely chopped pistachios
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line two baking trays with baking paper. Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar in a bowl until pale and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until combined. Stir in flour, baking powder, zest, cardamom and whole pistachios.

STEP 2 Divide dough into two logs about 20cm long x 3cm high, then flatten slightly. Lightly brush with egg yolk. Bake for 35–40 minutes, swapping tray positions halfway through cooking. Set aside on trays for 10 minutes to cool slightly.

STEP 3 Use a serrated knife to cut logs into 1cm-thick slices. Arrange the slices, in a single layer, on two baking trays. Bake for 20 minutes, swapping trays halfway through cooking. Set aside to cool completely on trays.

STEP 4 In a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of gently simmering water, melt chocolate until smooth. Dip each biscotti halfway into white chocolate. Sprinkle with pistachios and lemon zest. Set aside until chocolate has set.

COOK'S TIP

Make sure you use whole pistachios in the dough – this gives you a bright cross-section of green throughout the sliced biscotti.

PFEFFERNÜSSE

Preparation time 20 mins plus 30 mins chilling
Cooking time 20 mins
Makes 16

125g unsalted butter, softened
2 tablespoons molasses
¾ cup brown sugar
1 free-range egg
2¾ cups plain flour
1 teaspoon cinnamon powder
1 teaspoon nutmeg powder
1 teaspoon cardamom powder
1 teaspoon clove powder
½ teaspoon white pepper
½ teaspoon bicarbonate soda
½ teaspoon baking powder

ICING

1 cup pure icing sugar, sifted
1 tablespoon water

STEP 1 Using a stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment, beat butter, molasses and sugar in a bowl on medium speed for 2–3 minutes or until pale and smooth. Add egg and beat until combined.

STEP 2 In a bowl, sift flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, clove, pepper, bicarbonate soda and baking powder. Fold half the flour mixture into the butter mixture, then fold in remaining flour mixture. Turn dough onto a clean surface and form into a disc. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate dough for 30 minutes.

STEP 3 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced and line two baking trays with baking paper. Using a heaped tablespoon of mixture at a time, roll dough into 3cm balls. Arrange balls on trays, allowing 4cm space between for spreading.

STEP 4 Bake for 14–16 minutes, rotating the trays halfway through baking. Cool on trays for 10 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool completely.

STEP 5 In a small bowl, mix icing sugar and water until well combined. Dip tops of the biscuits in icing and transfer to a wire rack. Set aside until firm.

COOK'S TIPS

- To give your icing a delicate floral flavour, stir ½ teaspoon orange blossom water into the icing sugar with the water.
- Make sure you leave enough space between the biscuits – this is important as they spread slightly when baking. ■

fanciful twists

Put a spin
on traditional
slice-and-bake
Christmas biscuits.

CHRISTMAS
TWISTS

CHRISTMAS TWISTS

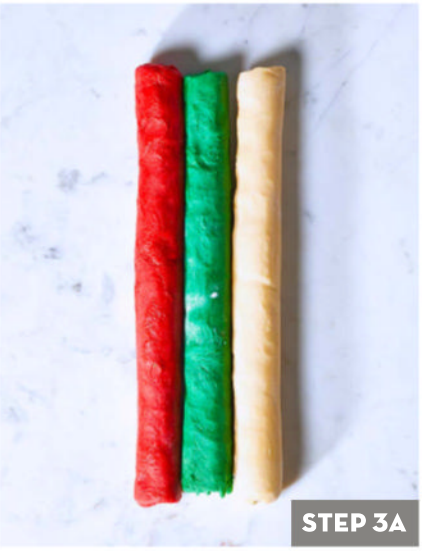
Preparation time 20 mins plus 3 hours chilling
Cooking time 20 mins
Makes 48

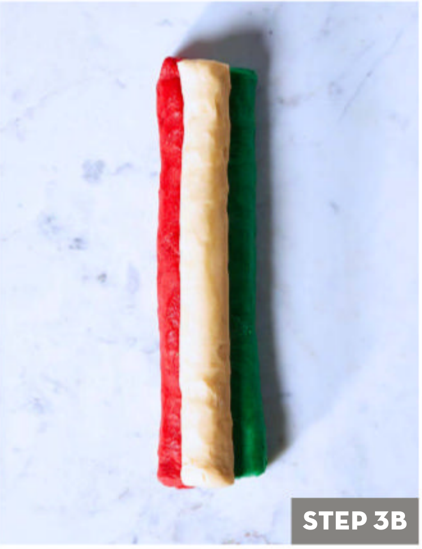
225g unsalted butter, softened
⅔ cup caster sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon sea-salt flakes, crushed
2 free-range eggs
3 teaspoons vanilla extract
2 cups plain flour
Red and green gel food colouring
3 teaspoons water
Red and green decorating or sanding sugar

STEP 1 Using a stand mixer, beat butter in a large bowl on high speed for 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder and salt. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, scraping the bowl's sides as needed. Beat in one of the eggs and the vanilla. Add half the flour and beat on low speed until combined. Repeat with remaining flour.

STEP 2 Divide dough into thirds. Tint one portion red and one green with food colouring, leaving remaining dough plain. Shape each into a 10cm log. Wrap each portion in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour or until dough is easy to handle.

STEP 3 On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 30cm log. Place logs side by side. Stack the plain log on top. Twist logs together and lightly roll into a smooth log. Lightly beat remaining egg and water with a fork. Brush over roll. Place decorating sugar on a sheet of baking paper. Roll log in sugar to coat. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 1–2 hours or freeze for 30 minutes to 1 hour or until firm enough to slice.


STEP 3A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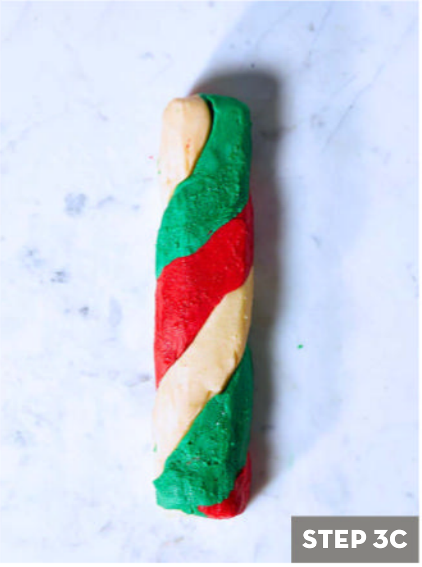
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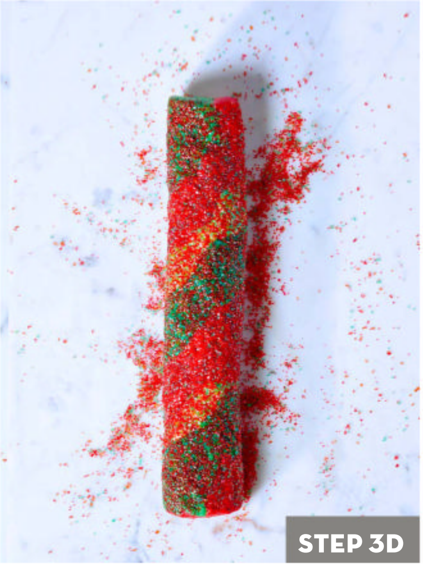

STEP 3D

STEP 4 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line four oven trays with baking paper. Use a sharp knife to cut log into 0.5cm-thick slices. Place on trays, allowing room for spreading. Bake, two trays at a time, for 7–9 minutes or until bottoms are light golden. Cool on the trays for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

COOK'S TIP

Look for decorating sugar at cake decorating supply outlets or online. Sanding sugar is a type of decorating sugar with coarse, glittery crystals. It's available at Spotlight stores, some supermarkets and online.

KEEP DOUGH LOGS IN THE FRIDGE TO SLICE AND BAKE FOR CHRISTMAS COOKIES ON DEMAND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BAKE IT ALL AT ONCE – JUST SLICE OFF AS MUCH AS YOU NEED.

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT SWIRL COOKIES

Preparation time 20 mins plus 3 hours chilling
Cooking time 20 mins
Makes 48

- **225g unsalted butter, softened**
- **⅔ cup caster sugar**
- **1 teaspoon baking powder**
- **½ teaspoon sea-salt flakes, crushed**
- **1 free-range egg**
- **3 teaspoons vanilla extract**
- **¼ teaspoon peppermint extract**
- **2 cups plain flour, plus extra for dusting**
- **60g dark chocolate, melted**
- **Red decorating sugar or sanding sugar**

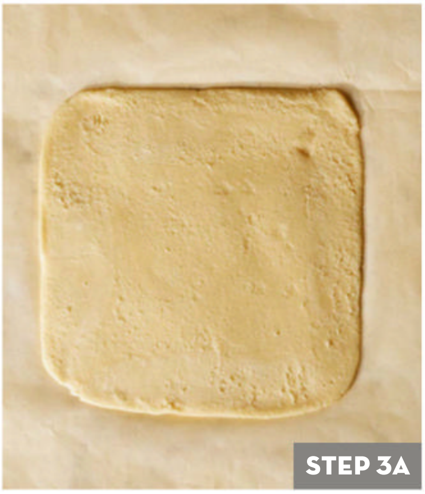
STEP 1 Using a stand mixer, beat butter in a large bowl on high speed for 30 seconds. Add sugar, baking powder and salt. Beat on medium speed for 2 minutes, scraping the bowl as needed. Beat in egg, vanilla and peppermint extract. Add half the flour and beat on low speed until combined. Repeat with remaining flour.

STEP 2 Divide dough in half. Knead chocolate into one portion. Shape each into a rectangle. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to 1 hour.

STEP 3 Lightly dust dough portions with flour. Roll out between sheets of baking paper to a 20cm square. Stack, then tightly roll up into a log.

STEP 4 Use your hands to flatten slightly into a rectangle. Roll again between baking paper to a 30cm x 25cm rectangle. Starting from one long side, roll tightly into a 30cm log. Place decorating sugar on a sheet of baking paper. Roll log in sugar to coat. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 1–2 hours or freeze for 30 minutes to 1 hour or until firm enough to slice.

STEP 5 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Line four oven trays with baking paper. Cut log into 0.5cm-thick slices. Place on trays, allowing room for spreading. Bake, two trays at a time, for 7–9 minutes, until bottoms are light golden. Cool on trays for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely. ■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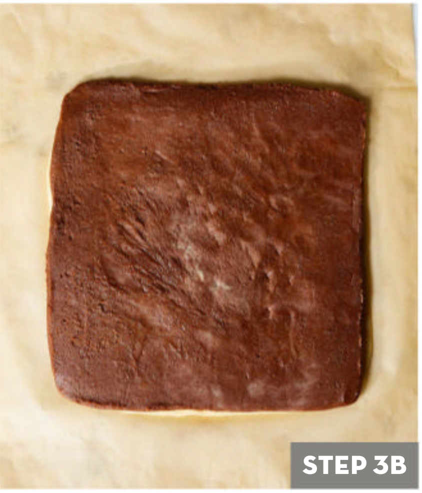
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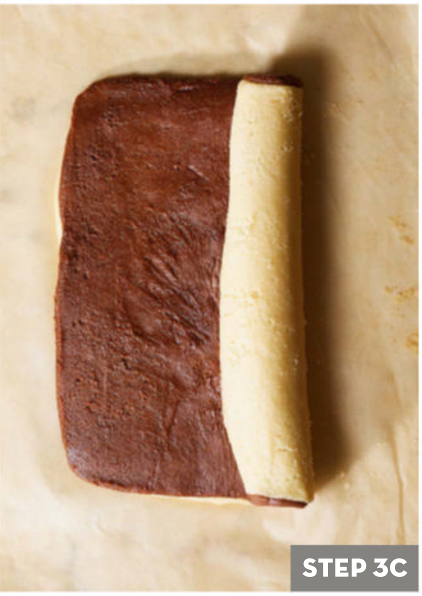
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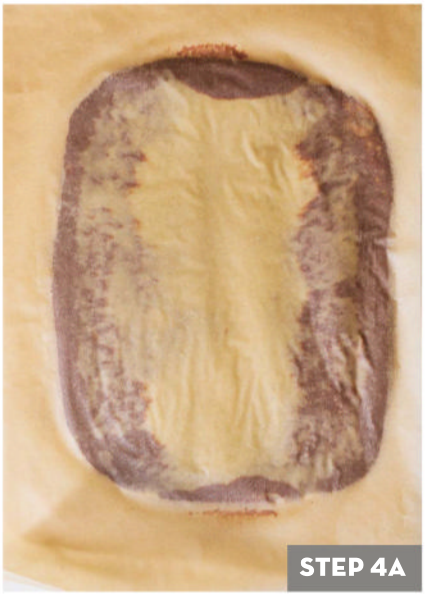
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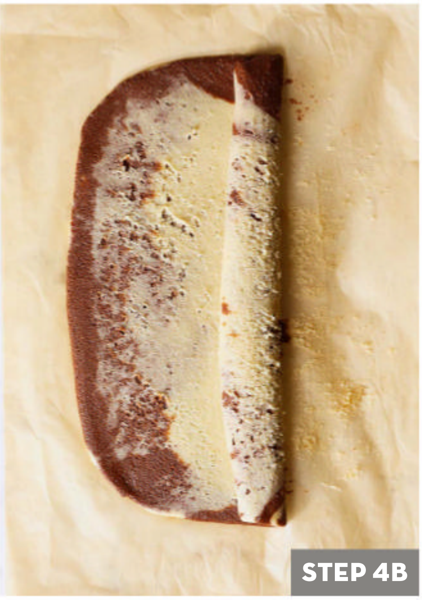
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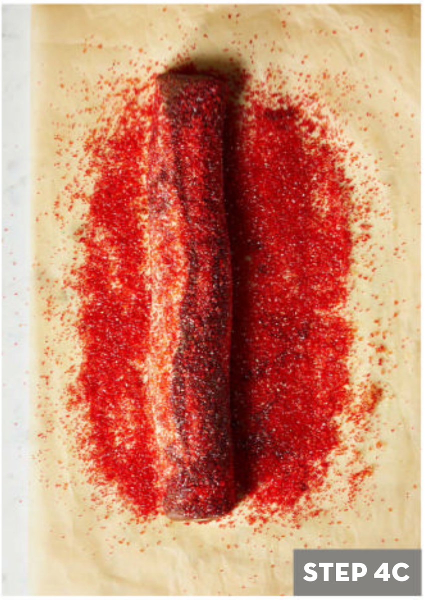

STEP 4C

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT SWIRL COOKIES

Matt Moran
My Perfect Chicken Stock

TAKING STOCK

Introducing our new recipe series with iconic Aussie chef Matt Moran.

Photography TIM ROBERTS *Styling* LUCY BUSUTTIL *Recipes* MATT MORAN

FISH AND PRAWN PIE
Recipe on page 40

Aussie chef Matt Moran has learnt a few tricks in his time on the cooking scene. His latest endeavour is all about helping everyday Aussies get their home cooking closer to chef level – with minimal effort, of course! To celebrate his new stock range, My Perfect Stock, Matt is serving up delicious seasonal recipes for BHG readers. Add a pack of his vegetable, chicken or beef stock to your shopping list for an easy and affordable way to elevate your everyday cooking.

For our vintage issue, we spoke to Matt about his favourite throwback recipes, and what nostalgia in the kitchen means to him.

BHG: Is there a recipe from your childhood that inspires you today?
MM: Yes, it would have to be my Nan's lamb roast, sitting around a table with all my family on a Sunday. These days when I'm at home or the farm, nothing makes me happier than cooking for family and friends, all of us sitting around the table together. I'll always start with a piece of beautiful protein – lamb, beef or chook – and then build a menu around a selection of seasonal sides.

BHG: What are your favourite seasonal produce picks at this time of year?
MM: Right now, it's all about asparagus, broad beans, peas – those bright green flavours that really sing of the season. They're simple ingredients, but they highlight the change of season in such a beautiful way and can completely lift a dish.

BHG: How do you twist traditional recipes to make them lighter or more accessible without losing their charm?
MM: For me, it's all about balance. If you're cooking something rich, like a stew or a pie, you don't want it to feel too heavy. I'll always put a simple salad on the table. I grow lettuce year-round in the garden at the farm, and there's nothing better than picking fresh leaves, tossing them together, and serving them alongside the meal.

BHG: Are there any retro recipes you think should make a comeback?
MM: Vol-au-vents definitely deserve a comeback. They've got that great retro feel, and when you do them well with good pastry and seasonal fillings, they're seriously tasty. I had a bit of fun making them with Courtney Act on *Memory Bites* – it really reminded me how good they can be.

BHG: Are there old-school cooking techniques that home cooks can rediscover to save them money or time, or to get maximum flavour for little effort?
MM: Definitely. Braising is one of those old-school techniques that's simple and works beautifully with more affordable cuts of meat. Pork ribs are a favourite of mine. I'll braise them in a tray with My Perfect Chicken Stock, until they're tender and full of flavour, then finish them on the barbecue with a glaze.

BHG: What retro recipes have stood the test of time, in your opinion?
MM: A fish and prawn pie would have to be one. It's a real retro classic that still holds up today. Creamy, comforting, full of flavour, and when you make it with beautiful seafood and My Perfect Vegetable Stock, it never feels old-fashioned. And, of course, pavlova. It's never really gone out of fashion and still makes everyone smile the moment it's brought out.

BBQ PORK RIBS
Recipe on page 40

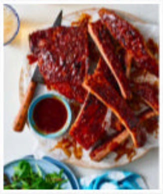
FISH AND PRAWN PIE

Preparation time 30 mins
Cooking time 50 mins
Serves 4

1 sheet good-quality puff pastry, defrosted
1 free-range egg yolk

FILLING
500ml Matt Moran My Perfect Vegetable Stock
100ml olive oil
8 green onions, washed, thinly sliced
1 large leek, washed, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 sprigs thyme
2 bay leaves
2 stalks celery, diced
100ml dry vermouth
35g butter, diced
35g plain flour
Finely grated zest of 2 lemons, plus lemon wedges, to serve
1 bunch dill, chopped
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
200g raw prawn meat, coarsely chopped
600g snapper fillet, skin removed, roughly chopped
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan-forced. To prepare pastry, place a large pie dish upside down on the pastry sheet. Trim pastry to fit dish, allowing for 1.5cm overhang on all sides. Using a spoon, gently indent pastry in lines across pastry to resemble fish scales. Cut a 2cm-diameter hole in the centre to allow steam to escape. Place pastry on a lined tray and refrigerate.
STEP 2 Heat stock in a medium saucepan on medium heat until it comes to a simmer. Reduce heat to low.
STEP 3 Heat oil in a large heavy-based saucepan on medium heat. Add white parts of green onion, leek, garlic, thyme, bay leaf and celery. Cook on low for 5 minutes or until tender, then add vermouth. Cook for a further 7 minutes or until liquid has almost evaporated.
STEP 4 Remove bay leaf and thyme. Add butter and flour and cook for 3–4 minutes, stirring continuously until the mixture reaches a sandy consistency. Add stock gradually, stirring constantly until incorporated and the sauce thickens. Cook for a further 2 minutes, then pour into a large dish. Set aside to cool to room temperature.
STEP 5 Add zest, dill, parsley, prawn, snapper and remaining green onion to the cooled sauce and gently fold together. Season. Transfer to the pie dish. Cover with pastry; secure edges by pressing into the sides of the dish.
STEP 6 In a bowl, combine egg yolk with a splash of water and pinch of salt. Using a pastry brush, brush over pastry.
STEP 7 Bake for 25–30 minutes, until pastry is golden brown and pie is cooked through. Remove from oven and set aside to cool slightly. Serve with lemon wedges.



BBQ PORK RIBS

Preparation time 20 mins plus 1 hour marinating
Cooking time 2 hours 20 mins
Serves 2

1 rack American-style pork ribs
½ brown onion, peeled, thinly sliced
500ml Matt Moran My Perfect Chicken Stock
Mixed salad leaves, to serve (optional)

MARINADE SALT
3 tablespoons sea-salt flakes
3 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
2 teaspoons cracked black pepper

BBQ SAUCE
1 tablespoon grapeseed oil
½ brown onion, finely chopped
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup apple cider vinegar
¼ cup tomato ketchup
½ teaspoon smoked paprika
½ teaspoon chipotle paste
1 teaspoon mustard powder
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season

STEP 1 To prepare the pork rack, turn rack upside down so bones are facing up. Starting at one corner, carefully slide a knife under the silver skin covering the bones, then gently remove the silver skin from the rack, taking care not to cut off any meat.
STEP 2 For the marinade salt, combine all ingredients in a bowl. Place pork rack on a tray and rub marinade salt all over. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
STEP 3 Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan-forced. Combine onion and stock in a medium roasting pan. Put marinated pork on top and cover with foil. Bake for 1 hour 45 minutes or until meat is tender but still on bones. Remove from oven and set aside to cool slightly.
STEP 4 Meanwhile, for barbecue sauce, heat oil in a small saucepan on medium heat. Cook onion for 4–5 minutes, stirring constantly, until onion starts to caramelise. Add sugar and stir until melted. Once sugar looks like a glaze, add remaining ingredients and whisk to combine. Bring to the boil and cook for 2 minutes or until sauce thickens. Season and remove from heat. Set aside to cool.
STEP 5 Preheat barbecue on high heat. Rub the tops of the ribs with a little oil and put top-side down on barbecue. Cook for 5–6 minutes or until caramelised. Turn ribs over and repeat to caramelise the other side.
STEP 6 Using a pastry brush, brush sauce onto ribs. Close the barbecue lid and cook for 3–4 minutes. Repeat this process twice more – this will allow the glaze to build up on the ribs. Remove ribs from barbecue.
STEP 7 Cut the ribs into individual pieces and serve with mixed salad leaves, if using. ■

Food preparation Ismat Awan

Harvey Norman

PRESENTS

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RATING
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Instant Pot Chicken Souvlaki Rice With Greek Salad & Tzatziki
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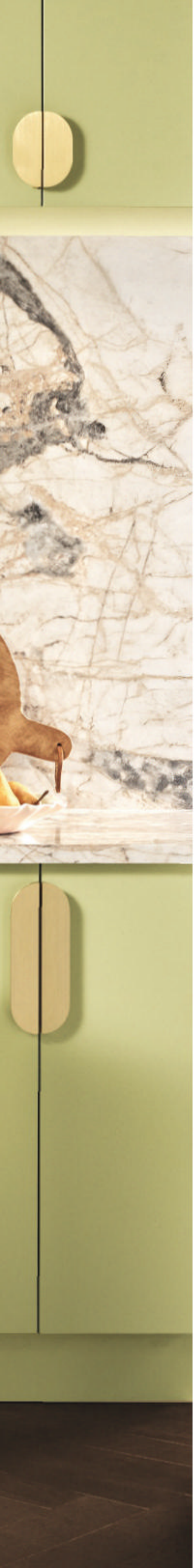
15
1h 30m
# Dinner
# Dinner
Instant Pot Short Ribs
Instant Pot Paella with Shrimp and Sausage Recipe



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ENERGY
RATING
603kWh

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Teamed with a convenient water dispenser, this unit's automatic ice maker saves you time and effort. No plumbing required, all you need to do is top up the fridge water tank.

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Big Fresh Zone
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Advanced cooling technology works to keep your fresh produce in optimal conditions, preserving crispness and flavour.

LG INSTAVIEW™ FRENCH-DOOR FRIDGE WITH WATER DISPENSER, GF-VN600BM, $2999.
An innovative design filled with practical features for the ultimate convenience of modern-day living.

3.5
ENERGY RATING
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4°
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Recipe
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Crushed | Water

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HISENSE VIEW INSIDE MULTI-ZONE FRIDGE, HRCD615TBWV (NEW), $3999.
Intuitive and modern, this multi-zone fridge freezer combines adaptable functionality with a sleek, spacious design.

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ENERGY
RATING
497kWh

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VITALED VEGETABLE DRAWER

VitaLED lighting slows down the wilting process, keeping fruit and vegetables crisper and fresher for longer. This drawer also features a tray, ideal for storing smaller items.

TOUCH CONTROL PANEL

This glass panel lights up with a simple tap, making it easy to adjust your fridge settings. Minimalist design and maximum control, perfectly tailored for your kitchen.

MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC 700L MULTI-DRAWER FRIDGE - DIAMOND BLACK, MR-WX700C-B-A, $4399.
Packed with advanced features, this family-sized fridge boasts toughened glass front panels for a luxurious look.

4.0 ENERGY RATING 425kWh

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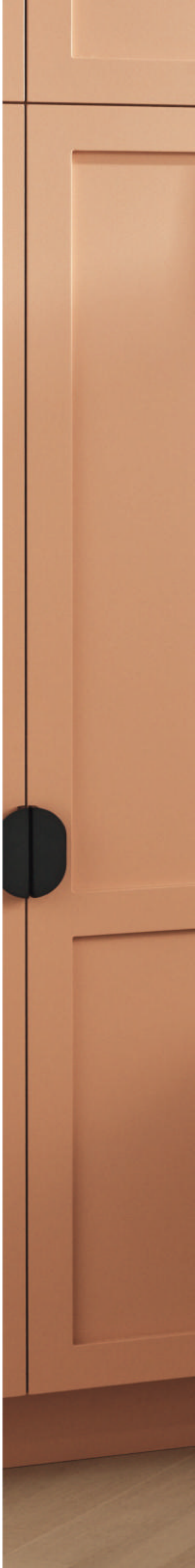

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True ROMANCE

Cottage gardens glory in a bevy of flowers. There are no strict rules to follow, no excessive pruning or rigid layouts, but here are eight tips you can try!

Words JENNY DILLON *Photography* LAURIE BLACK & TRELOAR ROSES

Lush and abundant, tousled and carefree, and full of old-world charm with meandering paths that take you on a journey of enchantment. Cottage gardens have evolved from utilitarian kitchen plots to become places of whimsy, colour, sweet scents and an overload of flowers. Think romantic roses, lovely lavender and dancing daisies. Be surprised when a spill of self-seeding annuals pops up in foreign parts. And be sure to include new-world plants that have been millennia in the making – flannel flowers, kangaroo paws and everlasting daisies.

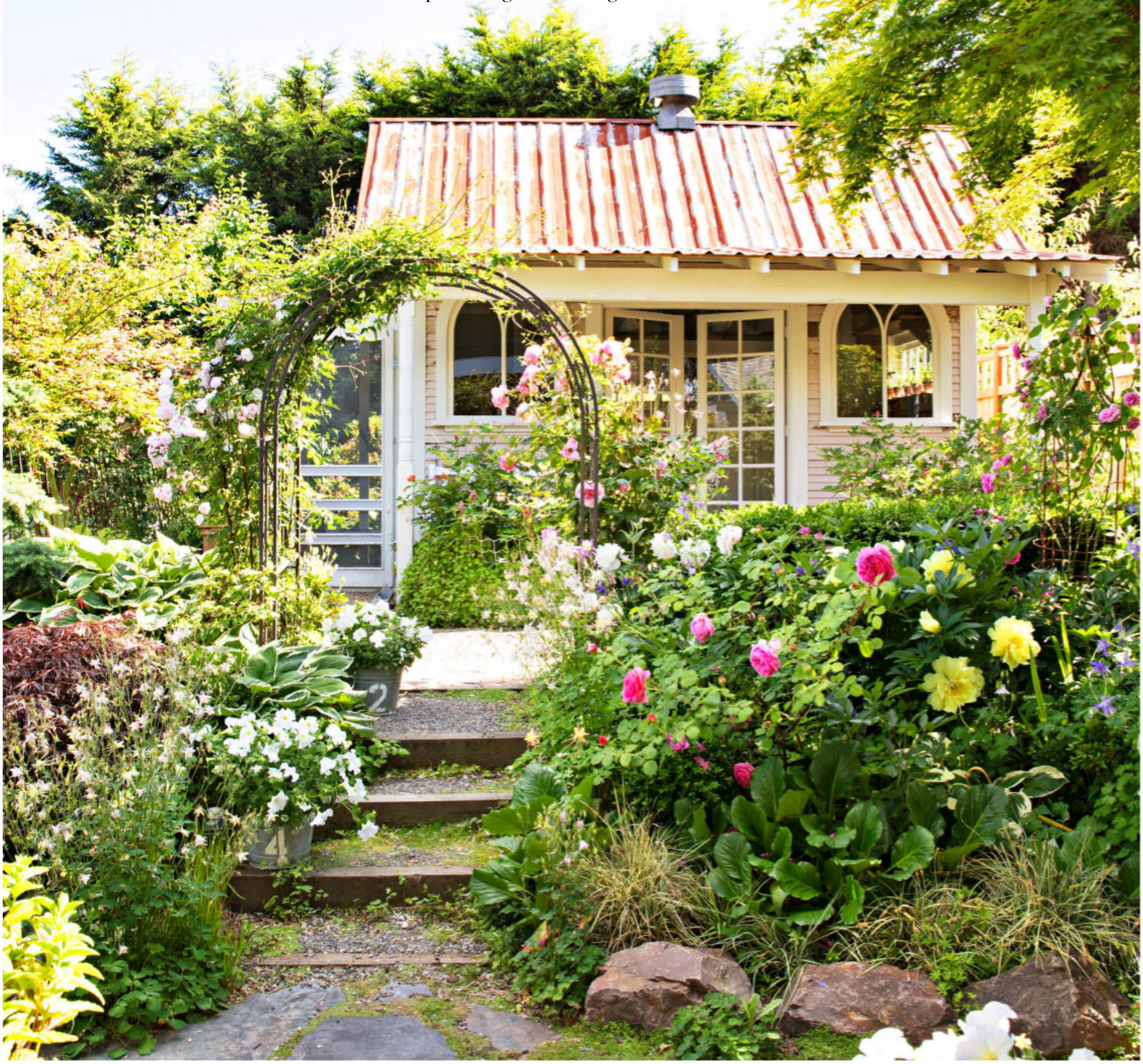
No. 1
MAKE A STORYBOOK ENTRANCE

Defying the straight line, billows of 'Sarah Bernhardt' peonies (opposite) cascade over a path, encouraging green alchemilla and purple columbines to do the same. A small box hedge plays host to a row of standard roses. One of the new David Austin roses is 'Olivia Rose Austin' (left), with its frilly, fragrant flowers.

A PEA GRAVEL PATH FITS IN WITH THE NATURALISTIC PLANTING EITHER SIDE OF IT.

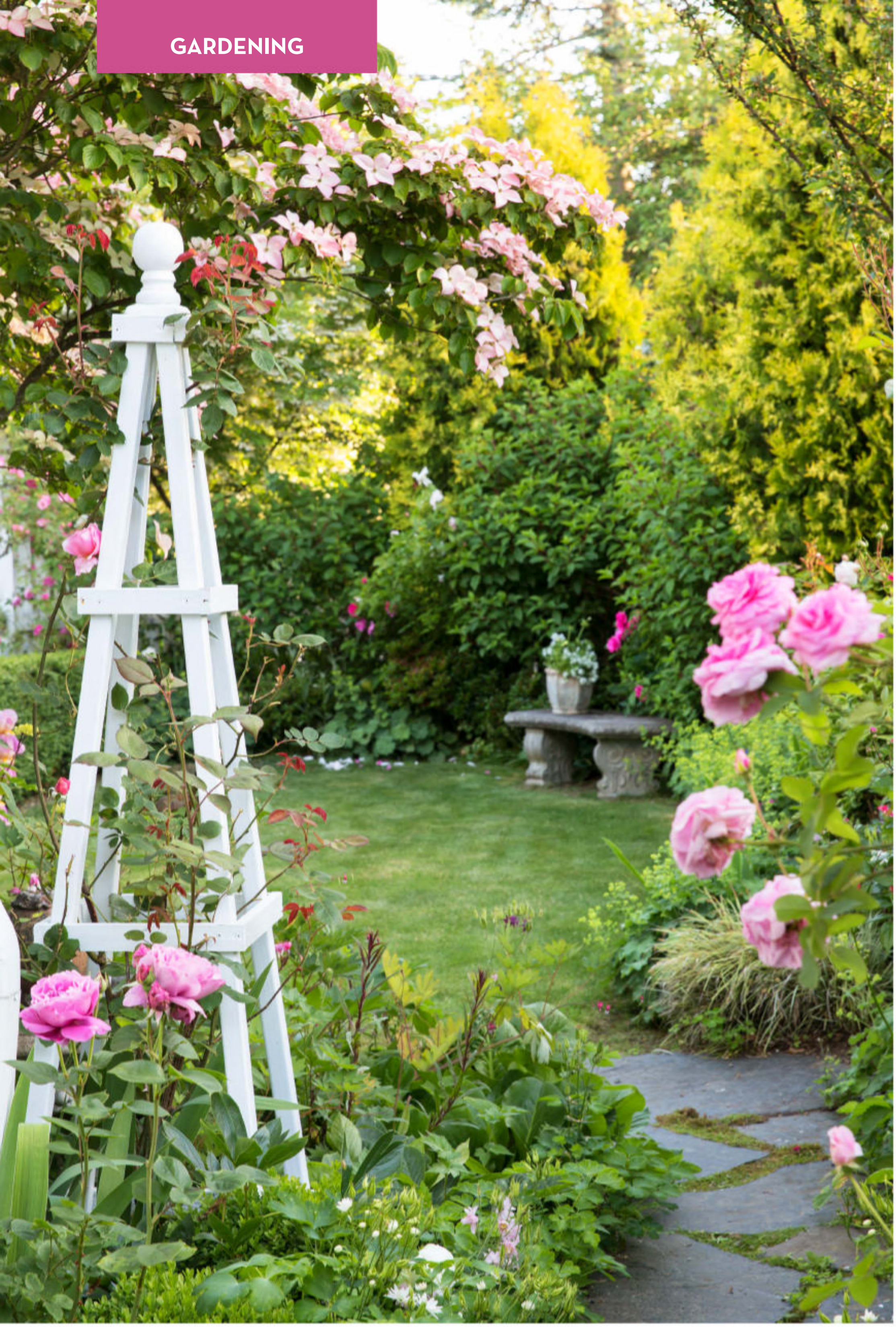
No. 2 CREATE TRANSITIONS

Escape into the outer sanctum of your garden in a delightful manner with a fragrant arch that gives support for climbing roses. You can vary the material you use underfoot. Natural stone flagstones are porous and attract moss in winter. Gravel creates sound as you walk on it. Wooden risers for steps and boulders at the path's edge add an organic feel.



No. 3 LET LOOSE

Aquilegia (opposite), also called columbine or Granny's bonnet, is a prolific self-seeder. Each spring and summer you'll find different colour combinations popping up where you least expect them, creating a natural, evolving garden.



No. 4

BUILD VERTICAL INTEREST

A tuteur (above) is a tall, four-sided pyramid structure that supports tall plants or climbers such as roses, clematis, jasmine and our own native wisteria, hardenbergia. Tuteur is the French word for "tutor", and in this case they help train plants upwards. They also give birds somewhere to perch and annoy the cat with an air of insouciance even the French would admire!

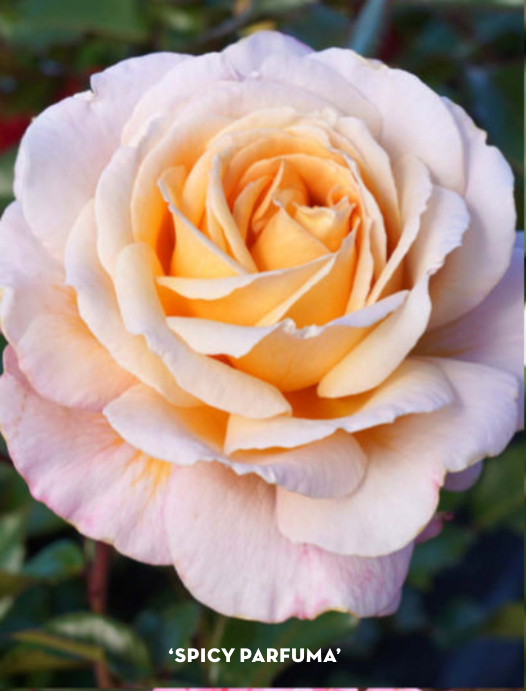
No. 5

COMBINE OLD AND NEW

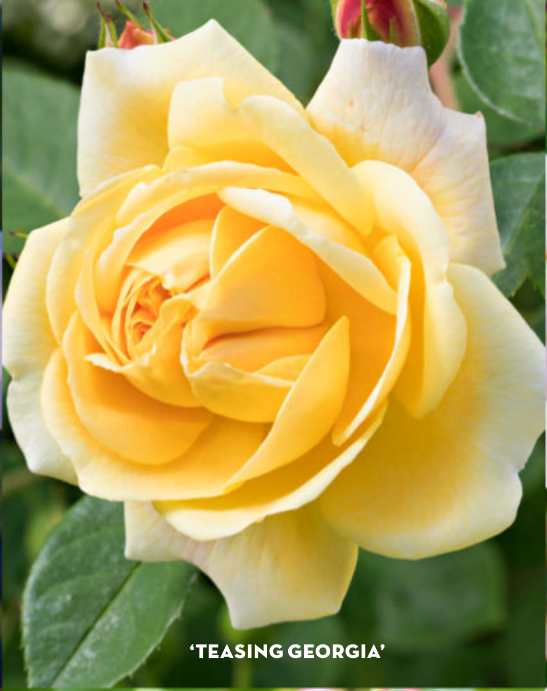
Planting heritage roses (opposite) alongside modern hybrids that are more disease resistant adds variety and increases your petal count. Most heritage roses have intoxicating fragrances and, when planted in the right conditions, can be vigorous and long lasting.

CARE FOR ROSES

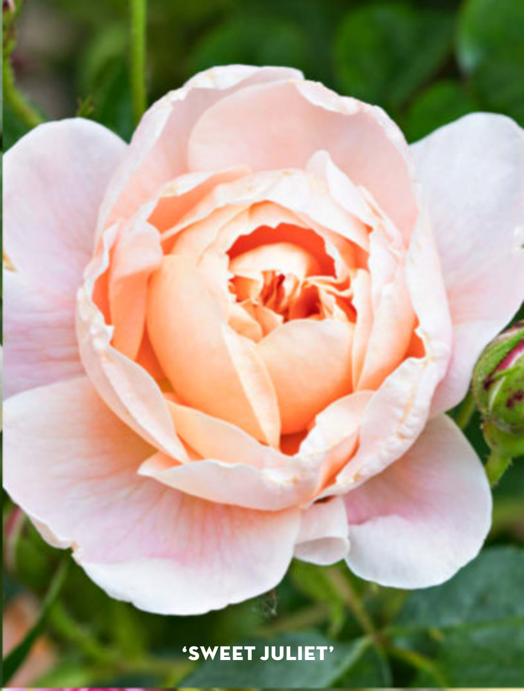
Aspect Full sun in summer.
Climate Temperate to Mediterranean with warm days, cool nights and distinct seasons. In subtropical and tropical areas, they are not happy when the humidity rises.
Soil Well-drained.
Water Once or twice a week. Water the soil, not the plant, as roses can develop fungal diseases if water settles too long on the foliage.
Food Fertilise at the start of spring, the start of summer and the start of autumn.
Pruning In winter when the rose bush is bare you can see areas where trouble may eventuate. Cut away dead branches right back to the stem. Remove spindly growth. Next, cut back the whole plant by about half – look for an outward-facing bud and cut just above that. Finally, open up the centre of the bush to enable good air circulation when flowers and foliage return.



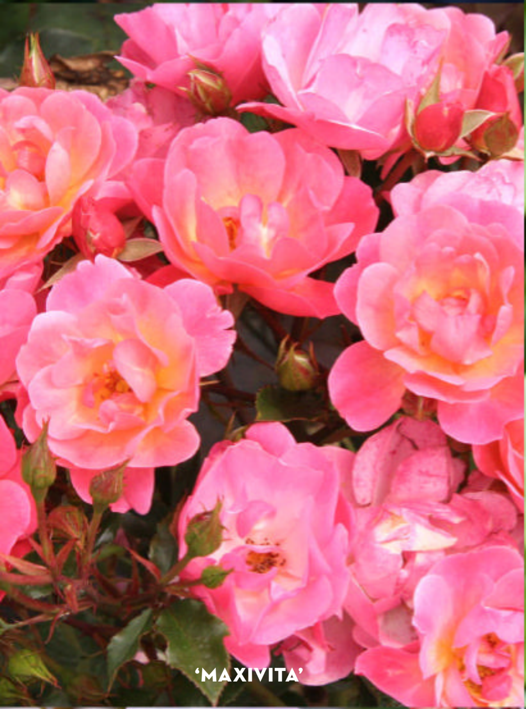
'SPICY PARFUMA'



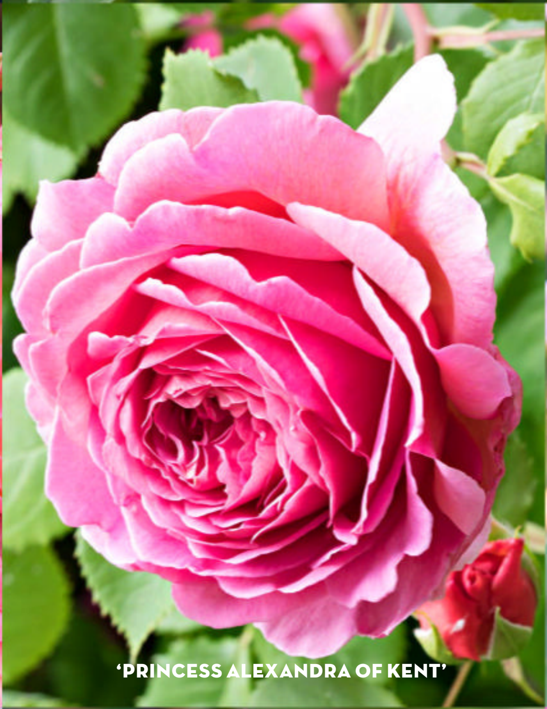
'TEASING GEORGIA'



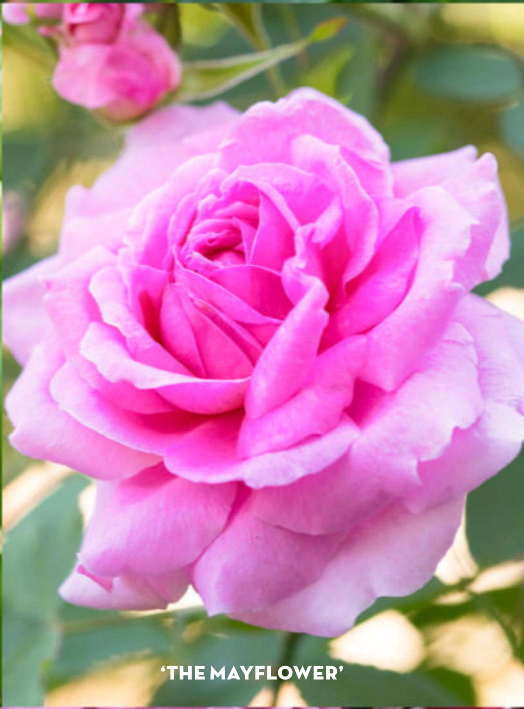
'SWEET JULIET'



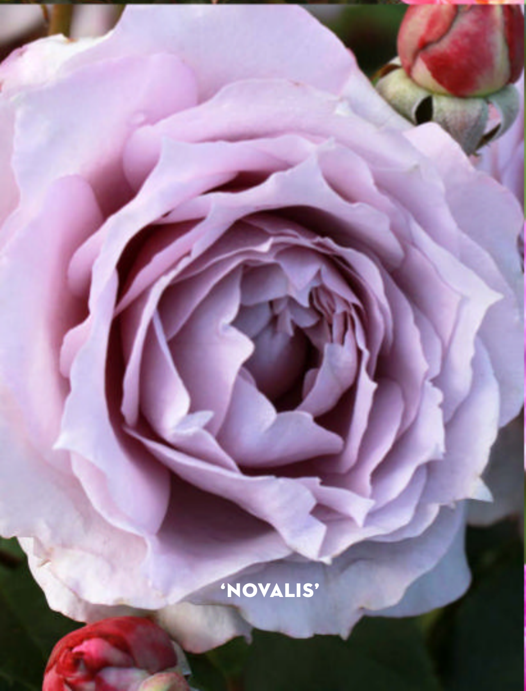
'MAXIVITA'



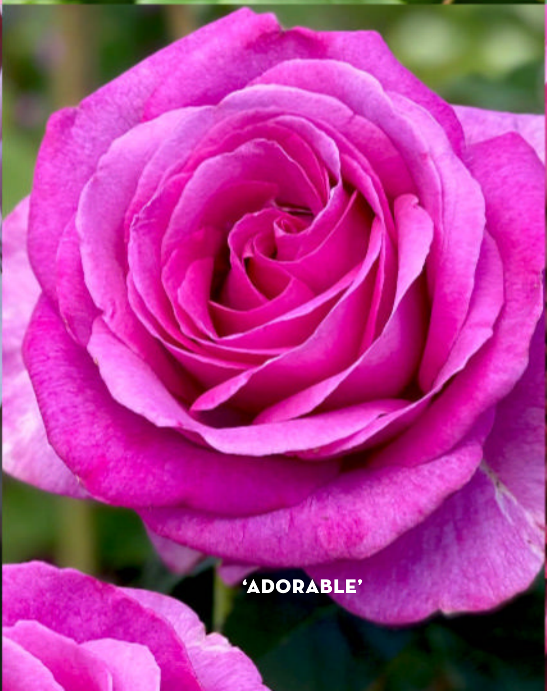
'PRINCESS ALEXANDRA OF KENT'



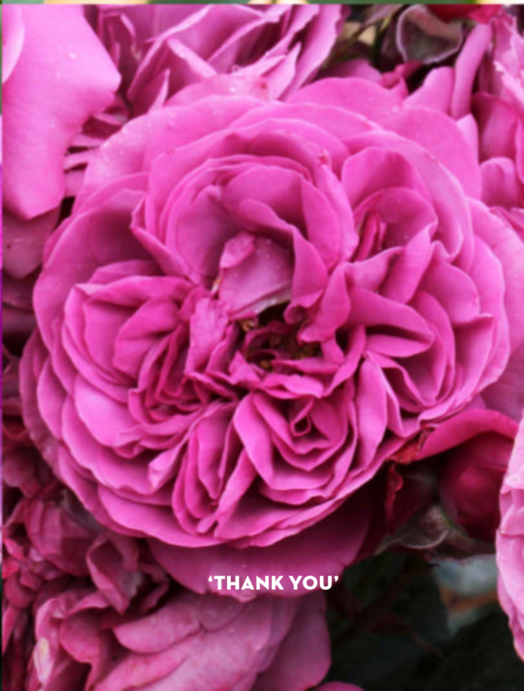
'THE MAYFLOWER'



'NOVALIS'



'ADORABLE'



'THANK YOU'

PINK ROSES AND WHITE COLUMBINES LEAD YOU TOWARDS THE NEXT CHEERFUL SCENE IN THE GARDEN.

No. 6

ALLOW FOR VISUAL BREAKS

Combining green and white adds calm to a riot of flowers (opposite). The picket fence and white outdoor furniture is classic cottage garden styling.

No. 7

CURATE VINTAGE FINDS

Keep up the nostalgia theme with a time-worn bird box (right), homemade bee hotel or a vintage bird bath. Add terracotta or ceramic planters with a lived-in patina of chips or cracks – they add character.

No. 8

CREATE BREATHING ROOM

A small patch of lawn (left) takes the tone down a step, but you can still maintain the profusion of flowers and perfume that are the essence of a cottage garden. Surround a pleached hornbeam tree with roses, then frame those with orbs of box so you still get a sense of enclosure. The wood-plank table and vintage cafe chairs take you back in time. ■

vintage

Combine timeless vintage and antique pieces with curated style to create an eclectic home full of character.

Tips and styling NONCI NYONI *Photography* CON POULOS
Words MEGAN OSBORNE

What makes a space 'vintage'? It's a question we debated here at BHG, with some cheeky jokes about age bringing wisdom and all that. Does the retro flair of the '70s count? How about the minimal cool of the '90s – and surely we need to wait another decade before Y2K earns its stripes? Or maybe vintage only relates to the pieces with real heritage, measured in centuries. In the end, we decided that vintage isn't tied to a strict timeline at all. If it captures the spirit of a moment past, it belongs. The pages ahead weave together a tapestry of vintage-inspired looks to help you design a space with stories to tell.

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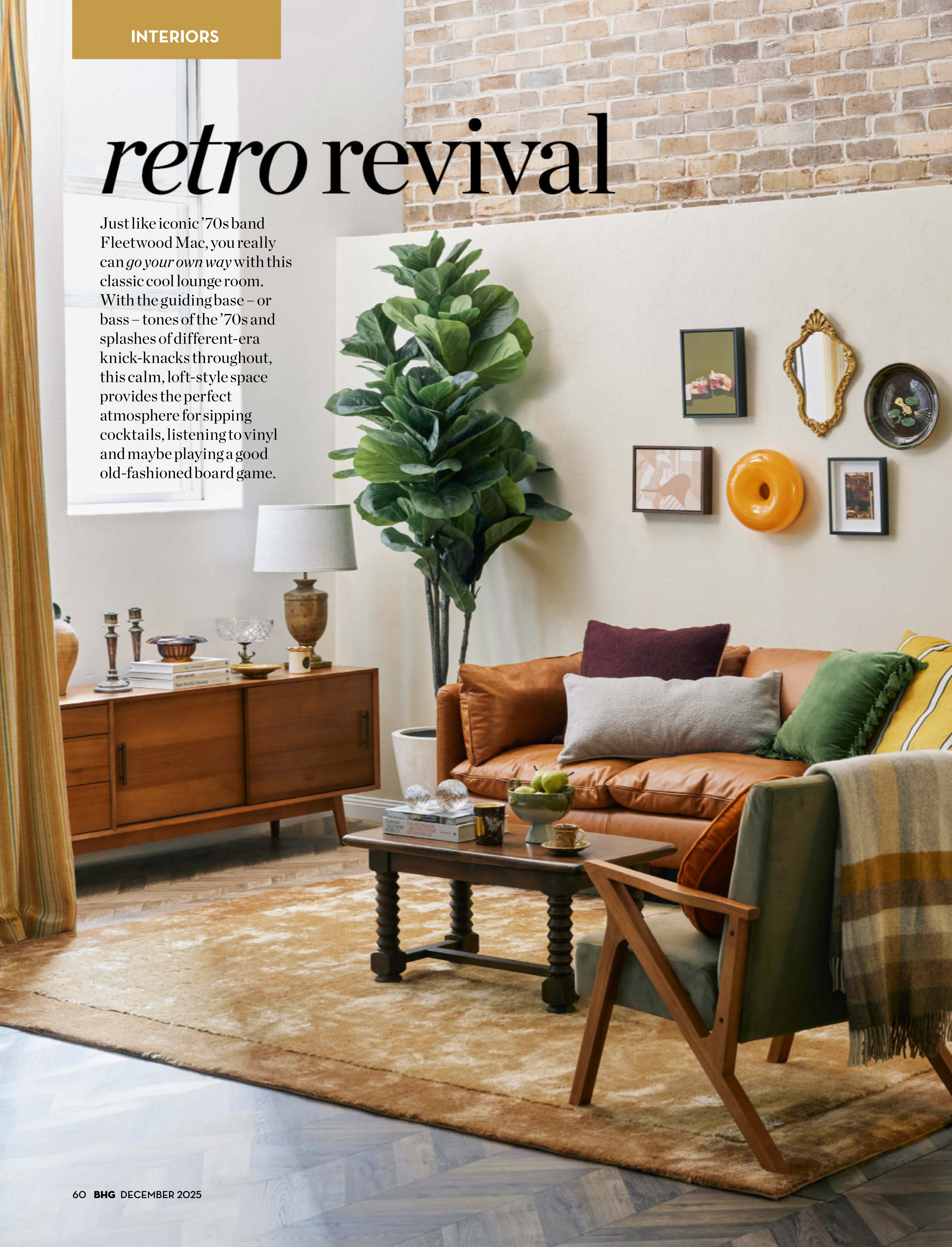
retro revival

Just like iconic '70s band Fleetwood Mac, you really can *go your own way* with this classic cool lounge room. With the guiding base – or bass – tones of the '70s and splashes of different-era knick-knacks throughout, this calm, loft-style space provides the perfect atmosphere for sipping cocktails, listening to vinyl and maybe playing a good old-fashioned board game.



TOP STYLING TIPS

1. Mix and match

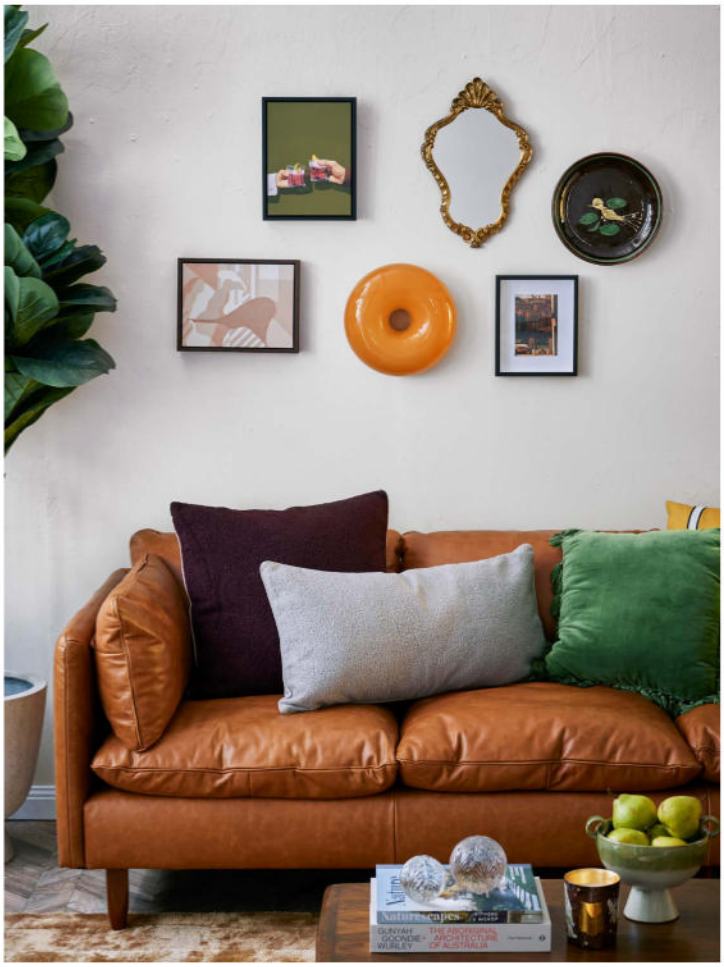
Choose hero furniture pieces with a retro look – think a soft leather sofa, a long, low wooden sideboard, or a thick-pile rug (shag if you really want to embrace the retro!). Bring in vintage and modern pieces to sit alongside.

2. Curated collection

Assemble a gallery wall specific to your tastes and the aesthetic you want to create. Include stylish lighting, antique mirrors, contemporary artwork and second-hand decorative plates.

3. Cohesive accents

Decorate your sideboard and coffee table with unique accessories in different finishes, confidently mixing glass, ceramic, metal and timber elements. Echo strong retro colours such as orange, green and mustard throughout.



Curtain in Arwen Buttercup fabric by Warwick, $77 per metre. Mid-century media **console**, $2399, West Elm. On console: antique **terracotta jug**, $490, The Vault Sydney. Silver-plated **candlestick holders**, $227, and **crystal comport**, $414, Love After Love. All **books**, Kinokuniya. Martha **table lamp**, $250, Provincial Home Living. On floor: Rozanda brown bordered **shag rug**, from $249, Miss Amara. Potted faux **ficus**, $595, from Provincial Home Living, in a Colin King Ficonstone **planter**, from $209, West Elm. Brutalist oak **coffee table**, $1250, The Vault Sydney. On table: antique French Aptware **cups and saucers**, $520, Love After Love. Eton three-seater **leather sofa** in vintage tan, $3499, Freedom. Ray Velvet **occasional chair**, $349.99, Mocka. On wall: *Chin Chin di Rosso* and *Nouveau Light I* **framed canvases**, from $129 each, Urban Road. Vintage French **gilt mirror**, $350, Love After Love. Ceramic **platter**, $290, Dusty Luxe. Varmblixt LED **lamp**, $99, IKEA. Walls in Porter's Paints eggshell **paint** in Western White, $159.90/4L.

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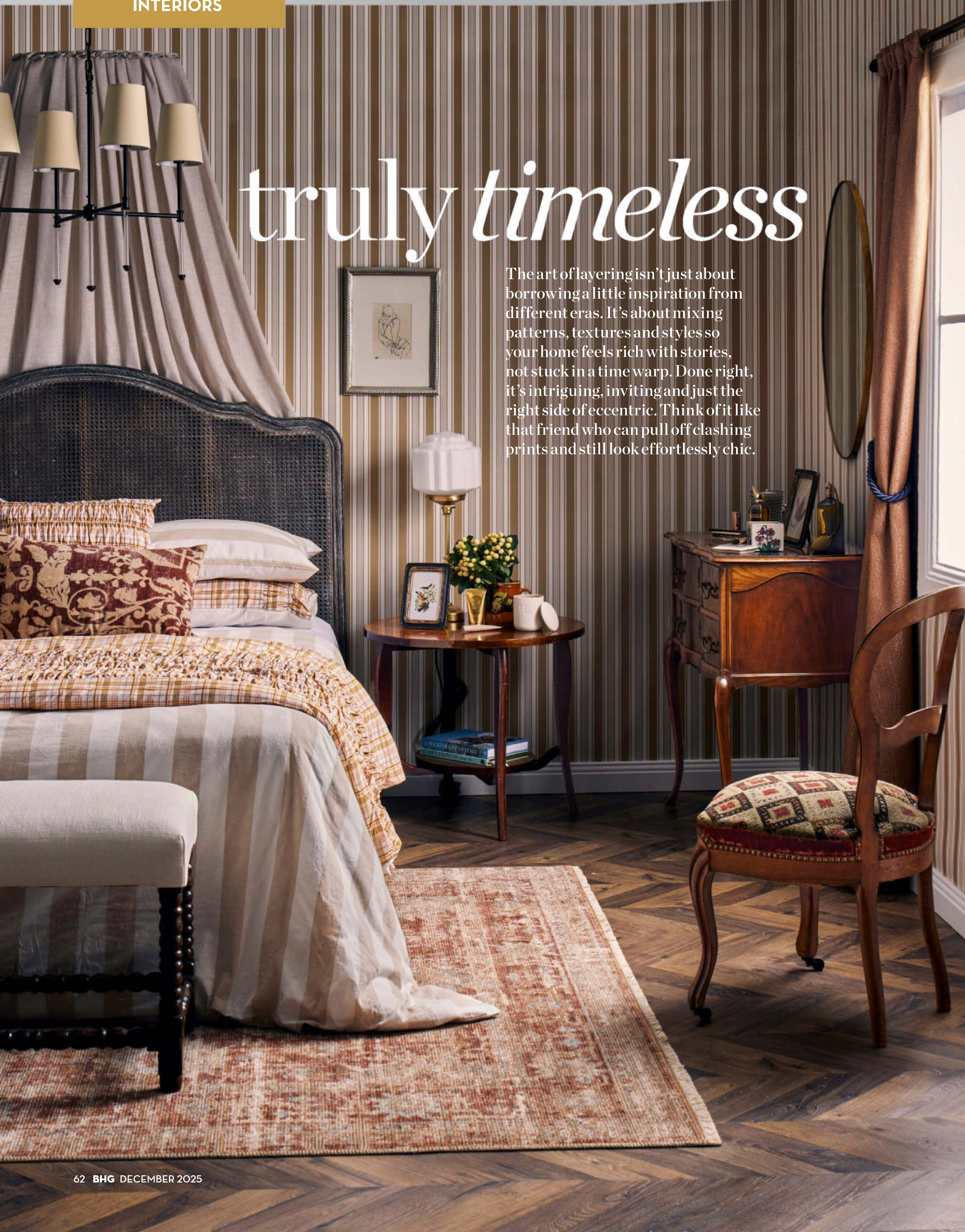

truly *timeless*

The art of layering isn't just about borrowing a little inspiration from different eras. It's about mixing patterns, textures and styles so your home feels rich with stories, not stuck in a time warp. Done right, it's intriguing, inviting and just the right side of eccentric. Think of it like that friend who can pull off clashing prints and still look effortlessly chic.

TOP STYLING TIPS

1. Big and bold

Embrace the pattern clash. Mix your stripes, gingham and textured rug with solid colours and furniture in the same palette to keep the look grounded.

2. Choose your hero shade

It becomes easier to combine vintage and contemporary pieces if you're sticking to a similar tone for all your timber furniture. For example, dark browns and black were chosen here, but you could opt for light oaks with warmer teak timbers instead.

3. Luxe layers

Bring textures and patterns together for a traditional look with a modern twist. Patterned fabric and neutral stripes in soft tones create a sophisticated yet cosy space that feels comfortable and elegant, and not from any specific era.

Canopy (behind bed) of Messina fabric in Fawn by Warwick, $99 per metre. Maynard **wallpaper** by Milton & King, $275 per roll. Camille **chandelier**, $1100, Bloomingdales Lighting. Rushworth **bedhead**, from $1995, Provincial Home Living. On bed: Vintage Stripe **quilt cover set**, $319.99, and Darcy **quilt cover set**, from $239.99, Linen House. Darcy **cushion**, $79, Linen House, and Rory **velvet cushion**, $79, Pottery Barn. Bobbin **ottoman**, $2400 a pair, The Vault. Antique **side table**, $650, Dusty Luxe. On table: Deco Glass **table lamp**, $265, Fat Shack Vintage. Pitcher, $120, Dusty Luxe. Australian House & Garden Hinterland **candle**, $34.95, Myer. At side, antique **commode**, $1100, Dusty Luxe. On commode: Alexandria II Anniversary **parfum**, $999/100ml, and Ambra eau de **parfum**, $449/100ml, both from Libertine Parfumerie. Orient **trinket box**, $185, Pepperwhites. On wall: 1970s Italian brass **mirror**, $1950, The Vault Sydney. **Salon chair**, $220, Dusty Luxe. **Curtain** in Bardot fabric by Warwick, $55 per metre. Brick Estate **rug**, from $169.99, Temple & Webster.

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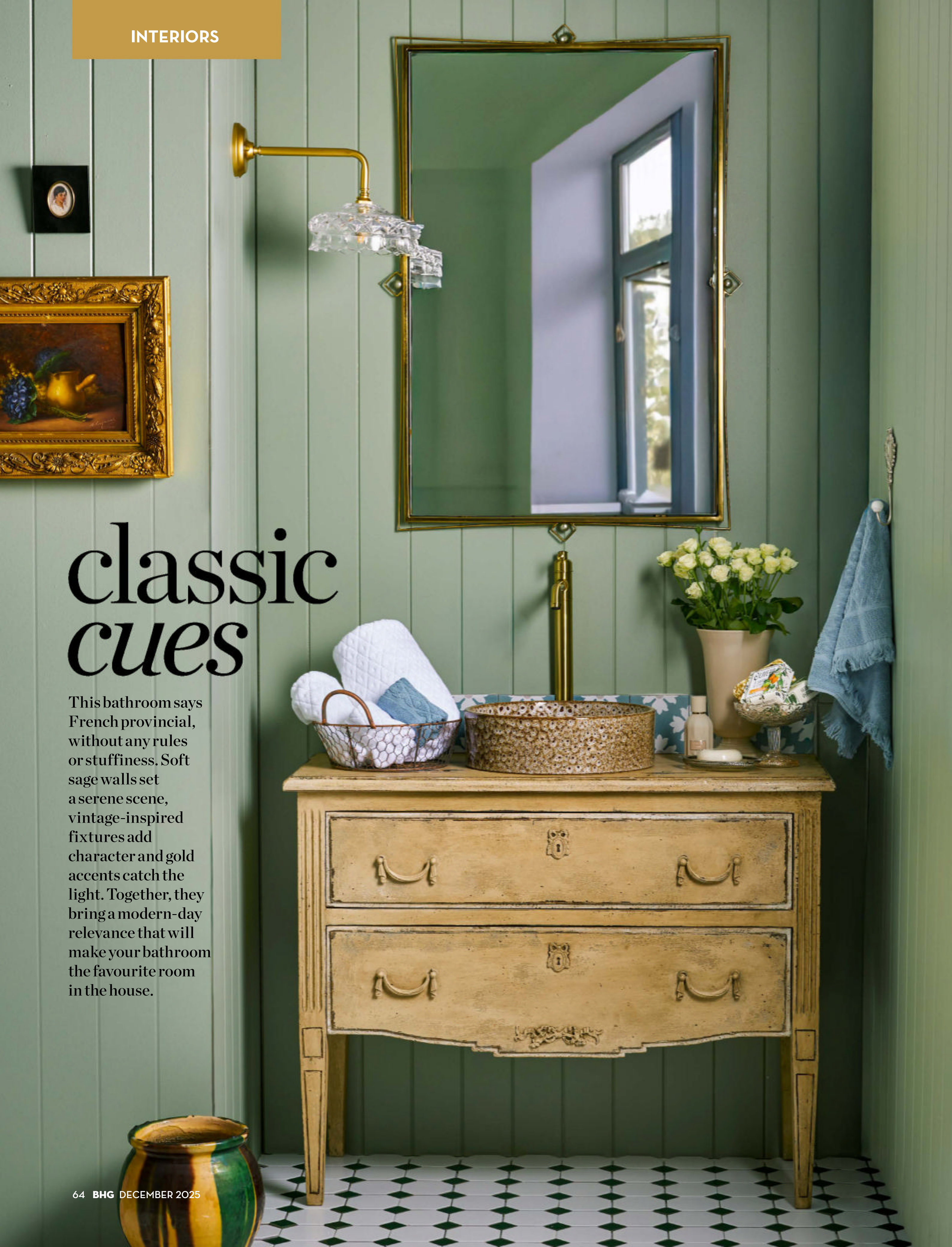

classic *cues*

This bathroom says French provincial, without any rules or stuffiness. Soft sage walls set a serene scene, vintage-inspired fixtures add character and gold accents catch the light. Together, they bring a modern-day relevance that will make your bathroom the favourite room in the house.

TOP STYLING TIPS

1. Dress it up

Give a vintage piece new life by repurposing a dresser for your bathroom vanity – you'll just need to give it a few modifications to allow for plumbing.

2. Go for gold

Matching your metallic finishes can instantly bring a cohesiveness to the room, especially if you're mixing vintage lighting or tapware with a mirror. Bright gold tones give a nod to classic elegance but, unlike a patina or aged brass, they won't look worn.

3. Second-hand finds

Arrange some vintage artwork and knick-knacks on the wall – this will help add interchangeable character and personality to the space.

Painted antique French **commode** from Provence, $1200, Dusty Luxe. Clay 350 ceramic above counter **basin**, $750, Robert Gordon Interiors. Phoenix Cromford **vessel mixer tap** in brushed gold, $663, The Blue Space. Pierce & Ward brass **wall mirror**, $399, West Elm. Marlow Zoe **wall tiles** (behind commode), $212.76 per sq metre, Tile Mall. St Kilda white octagon with green dot **floor tiles**, $77 per sq metre, The Blue Space. Apsley **wall light**, $149, Fat Shack Vintage. Royale **wall hook**, $29.95, French Knot. On commode: small **wire basket** with handles, $24.95, and Colette **soap dish**, $49.95, French Knot. Antique glass **comport**, $202, Love After Love. On floor: glazed 20th-century **pot**, $1280 for a pair, The Vault Sydney. On wall: 19th-century **miniature**, $295, and *Bouquet de Violettes 1901* **painting**, $595, both from Vintage Art Emporium. Walls painted in Dulux Wash&Wear low-sheen **paint** in sage green, $102/4L. ■

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top shelf

Build a wooden rack that doubles as a gorgeous display for vintage glassware.

Project, styling and photography GENEVA VANDERZEIL

FOR PROJECT SUPPLIES,
SEE STOCKISTS
ON PAGE 188.

EASY STEPS TO A WALL-MOUNTED GLASSWARE STORAGE RACK

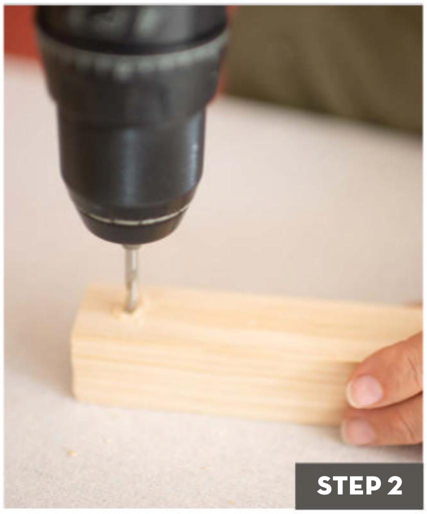
If you're as addicted to vintage and quirky glassware and crockery as I am, then chances are you'll need somewhere to store it. But instead of burying your collection in the cupboard, make a bespoke shelf that turns your glassware into art.

Gather your supplies

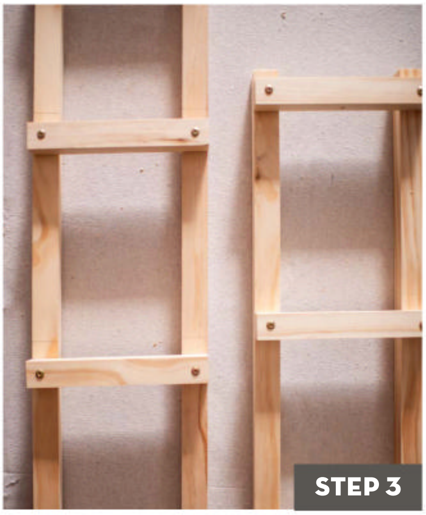
- Timber cut to following sizes using a drop or circular saw:
  - 4 pieces of 30 x 30mm timber at 2180mm (long vertical uprights)
  - 18 pieces of 30 x 30mm timber at 200mm (short horizontal supports)
  - 9 boards of 19 x 140mm timber at 900mm (shelves)
- Timber screws
- Wood stain
- Sandpaper: 120-grit and 180-grit sheets for smoothing boards and pegs

You'll also need

Hand saw, drill, level, hand mitt (for staining), tape measure, ruler, pencil and safety gear (goggles, gloves, dust mask).



STEP 2



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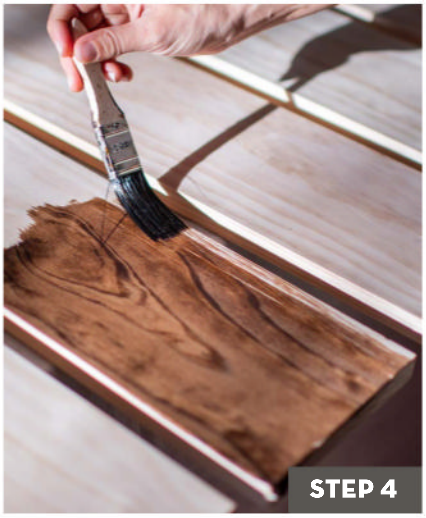


STEP 4

STEP 5

Here's how

STEP 1 Sand all cut edges smooth to remove splinters and give a neat finish.

STEP 2 On each of the short 30 x 30mm pieces, drill pilot holes through the ends. This prevents the wood from splitting when screws are inserted.

STEP 3 Position the short 30 x 30mm pieces onto the long uprights, spacing them evenly at 242mm. Fix in place with wood screws through the pilot holes, so you make two tall ladder-style side frames. These will hold the shelves securely.

STEP 4 Apply wood stain to the frames and shelves, working with the grain for an even look. Wipe away excess and allow to dry fully before moving on.

STEP 5 Place the 900mm shelf boards across the supports, ensuring they're flush and level. Secure each shelf by driving screws upwards through the support pieces into the underside of the shelf. This keeps fixings hidden and gives a clean look.

STEP 6 Move the rack into position against the wall. For stability and safety, especially if storing heavy glassware, fix the rack to the wall. Drive screws through the uprights into wall studs or use suitable wall anchors.

STEP 7 Once secure, arrange your glassware and crockery collection on the shelves. Mix shapes and heights for visual interest, or group by type for an organised display.

Safety notes

Cutting wood: Always clamp the board securely before cutting, and keep hands clear of the blade. Wear safety glasses when sawing.

Handling tools: Keep your fingers behind the drill bit and saw blade at all times.

Wear a mask while sanding: Fine particles can irritate your lungs – a basic dust mask will help protect you.

STABILITY TIP

Display heavier or wider glasses on the lower racks to help keep the weight balanced. ■

Picture perfect

Can't go past vintage fabrics? Use scraps to create elegant borders for frames.

Project NONCI NYONI *Photography* PHILLIP CASTLETON

EASY STEPS TO MAKE A FABRIC PICTURE FRAME

Gather your supplies

- Fabric scraps
- Fabric scissors
- Double-sided tape or spray adhesive
- Picture frames with mounting board
- Art or photo prints

STEP 1 Iron out any creases in the fabric if needed. Attach mounting board to the back of your fabric with double-sided tape or adhesive. Trim fabric.

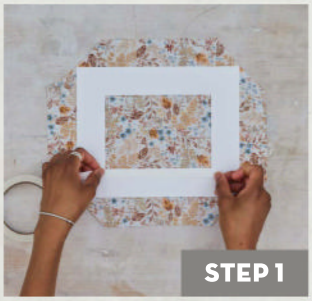
STEP 2 Cut from the centre of the fabric to each inner corner of the mounting board.

STEP 3 Fold fabric to a quarter triangle shape on the back of the mounting board and cut off excess fabric. Cut off the corner of the fabric on the outer edge of the mounting board. This allows for easy folding of the outer fabric.

STEP 4 Fold in the fabric on the outer edge of the mounting board and cut off excess fabric.

STEP 5 Put the mounting board back into the frame and add your preferred print. Secure and hang. ■

FOR PROJECT SUPPLIES, SEE STOCKISTS ON PAGE 188.



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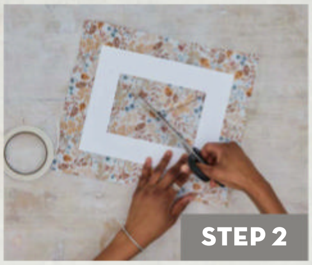

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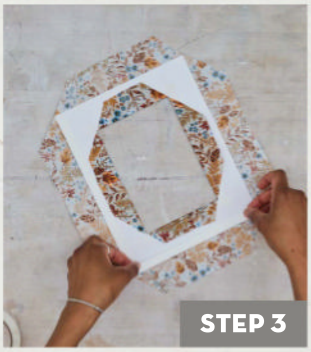

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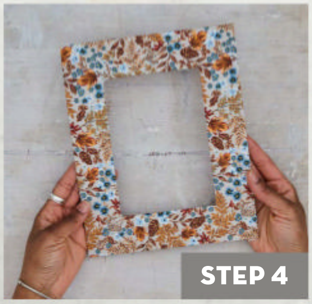

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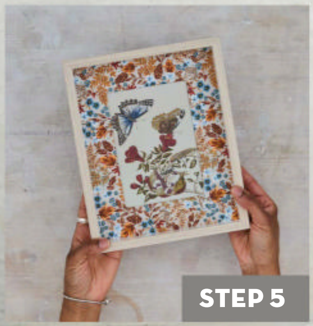


STEP 5

Life Unhurried
WITH NATURE
GARDEN DESIGN BY FIONA BROCKHOFF

> “BRING NEW OR THRIFTED FRAMES TO LIFE IN MINUTES WITH PRETTY FLORAL OFFCUTS.”

NONCI NYONI, STYLIST

better decorating

[THE LATEST PRODUCTS AND HOME INTERIOR TRENDS WITH JADA SUSAS]

SCAN ME
Scan this QR code to shop these items.

Floor candy

With its wool shag pile texture and bold floral pattern, this rug is a soft colour bomb just waiting to grace your floors. Featuring rich terracotta browns and pastel blues and pinks, it's a modern twist on the traditional Persian rug. Moroccan Nights felted wool rug, 180 x 275cm, $1400, from Kip & Co.

SO GOOD LOOKING

Add old-school glamour to your hallway with this faux antique. Willow & Silk Art Deco mirror in distressed gold, $323, from Myer.

LOUD & CLEAR

Ride the mid-century modern wave with this beautiful sideboard. Combining a deep walnut stain with fluted panelling and frosted glass, it's a storage solution that transports you back in time. Walnut-stained Gannon Retro sideboard, 210cm, $749, from Temple & Webster.

Bench with BENEFITS

Harvey Norman's Wisley outdoor bench is a timeless addition to any garden. Crafted from acacia timber with a natural finish, this slatted bench will withstand years of wear and tear. Wisley outdoor bench, $299, from Harvey Norman.

ONE MORE CUP

Go to sleep and wake up in the groovy 1970s. Blending earthy and vibrant tones and patterns, the HKLIVING 70s ceramics coffee collection is an eclectic tribute to coffee culture. The glazed stoneware mugs, saucers and pots will brighten any coffee corner. Coffee cups in Java, set of four for $64.95, from House of Orange. ■

LG

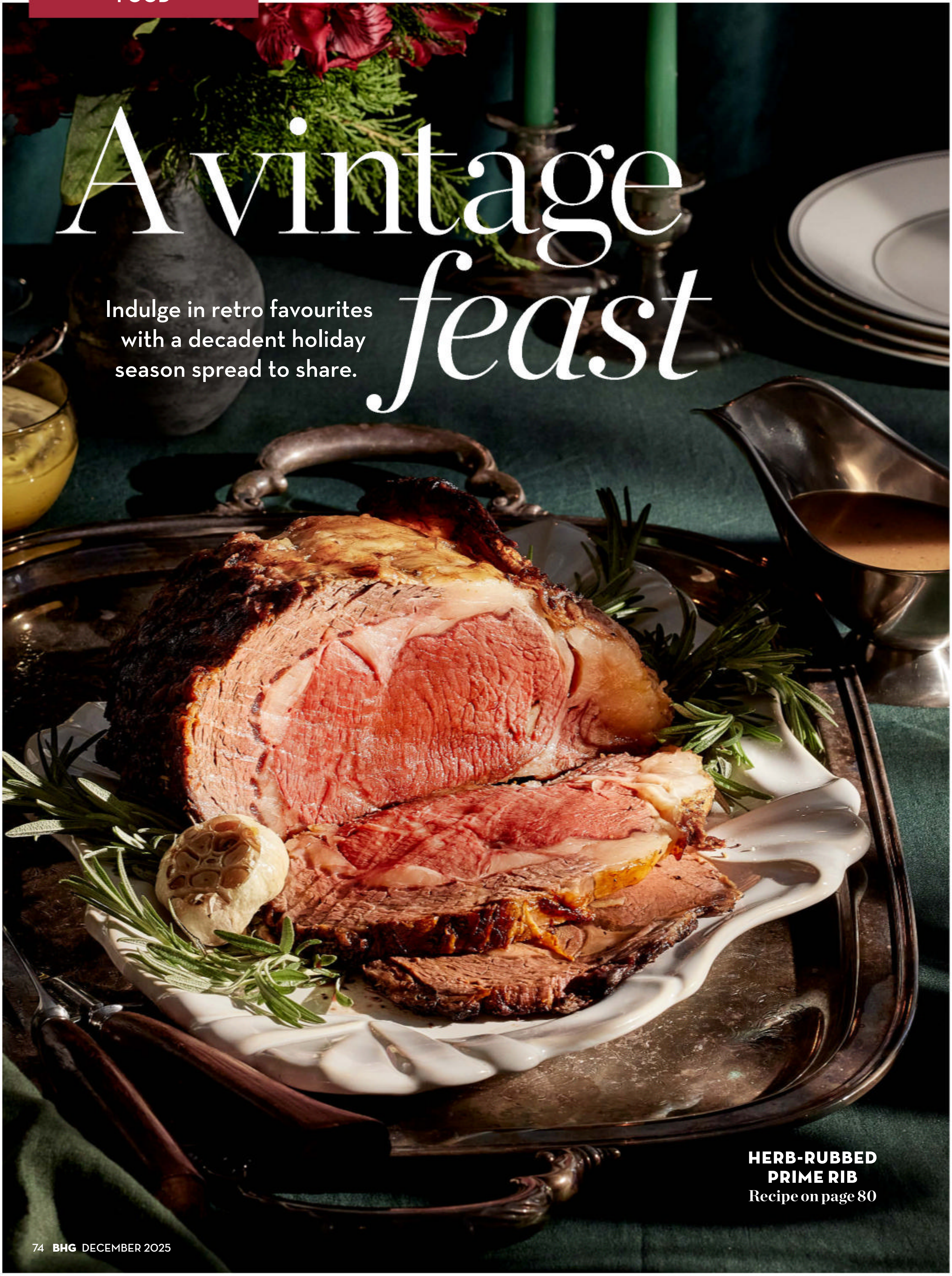
Master your kitchen with LG

Experience culinary excellence with the LG Kitchen Collection. The perfect blend of innovation and artistry, explore how LG InstaView™ ovens, cooktops and rangehoods can elevate your kitchen.

Find out more

A vintage *feast*

Indulge in retro favourites with a decadent holiday season spread to share.



HERB-RUBBED PRIME RIB
Recipe on page 80

BROWN SUGAR-GLAZED CARROTS

Recipe on page 80

WALNUT AND BLUE CHEESE STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Recipe on page 82

PARTY PUNCH
Recipe on page 82

TOMATO AND BACON DEVILLED EGGS

Recipe on page 82

GLAZED HAM BALLS
Recipe on page 80

HERB-RUBBED PRIME RIB

Preparation time 20 mins plus overnight chilling
Cooking time 2 hours 50 mins plus 30 mins standing
Serves 8

1½ tablespoons olive oil
2 teaspoons coarsely ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
1 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed
1 teaspoon sea-salt flakes, crushed
2.5–3kg boneless beef rib eye roast
3 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced

GRAVY

1 cup beef stock, plus 1 cup extra
2 tablespoons plain flour
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

HORSERADISH CREAM

300g sour cream
¼ cup mayonnaise
3 teaspoons horseradish cream
2 teaspoons dijon mustard

STEP 1 In a small bowl, combine oil, pepper, thyme, rosemary and salt. Cut shallow slits all over the beef and insert sliced garlic into the slits. Spread oil mixture over the beef. Cover roast loosely. Chill overnight.
STEP 2 Place roast, fat side up, on a rack set in a roasting pan. Let it sit on the bench for 1 hour to come to room temperature (this helps it cook evenly). Meanwhile, preheat oven to 250°C/230°C fan-forced. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the roast (without touching the pan).
STEP 3 Roast 20 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 150°C/130°C fan-forced. Continue roasting 1–1½ hours or until thermometer registers 50°C for medium rare (55°C after standing) or 2 to 2½ hours or until thermometer reaches 54°C for medium (58°C after standing).
STEP 4 Let beef stand 30 minutes or longer if time permits, loosely covered with foil.
STEP 5 Meanwhile, for the gravy, pour juices from the roasting pan into a measuring cup, skim and reserve fat. If there are browned bits in the roasting pan, add stock to the roasting pan and cook on the stove on medium heat, scraping the base with a wooden spoon. Pour into the measuring cup with the pan juices. In a small saucepan, stir flour with 2 tablespoons reserved pan fat. Cook, stirring, on medium heat, until it is simmering, about 1 minute. Stir in pan juices, extra stock and Worcestershire sauce. Cook on medium heat, stirring, until sauce comes to the boil and coats the back of a spoon.
STEP 6 For the horseradish cream, combine all ingredients in a small bowl.
STEP 7 Carve beef and serve with gravy and horseradish cream.

BROWN SUGAR-GLAZED CARROTS

Preparation time 5 mins
Cooking time 10 mins
Serves 8

3 bunches baby carrots with stems attached, scrubbed
60g butter, chopped
¼ cup lightly packed brown sugar
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season

STEP 1 Peel carrots, leaving stems attached. Halve any large carrots lengthwise. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil over high heat. Add carrots and cook for about 4 minutes, until bright orange but still firm. Drain. Wipe pan clean.
STEP 2 Return the pan to the stove. Add butter and brown sugar. Stir over medium heat for 2–3 minutes or until butter melts and the mixture is combined. Add carrots and toss gently for about 3 minutes, until the carrots are just tender and well coated in glaze. Season with salt and pepper.

GLAZED HAM BALLS

Preparation time 5 mins plus 30 mins chilling
Cooking time 12 mins
Serves 8

2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
1½ cups soft breadcrumbs
1 brown onion, finely chopped
1½ tablespoons milk
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
2 teaspoons dry mustard powder, divided
350g leg ham, very finely chopped
350g pork mince
½ cup lightly packed brown sugar
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
½ cup tomato sauce
2 tablespoons cider vinegar

STEP 1 Lightly grease a large rectangular baking dish. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, breadcrumbs, onion and milk, then season with pepper. Stir in 1 teaspoon of the mustard. Add ham and pork, mix well. Using damp hands, roll tablespoons of mixture into balls. Arrange balls in a single layer in prepared baking dish. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.
STEP 2 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced.
STEP 3 For the sauce, in a bowl, stir together the remaining 1 teaspoon mustard, brown sugar, tomato sauce and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over the ham balls,

CHANTILLY MASHED POTATO BAKE

Recipe on page 82

turning the balls to coat all over. Bake, uncovered, about 25 minutes until ham balls are cooked through.

PREPARE AHEAD

To make these ham balls ahead of time, store the uncooked ham balls in an airtight container lined with baking paper. Mix the sauce ingredients together and store separately in another airtight container. You can refrigerate the uncooked ham balls for up to 24 hours. Let ham balls and sauce stand for 20 minutes to come to room temperature before baking from Step 2.

TOMATO AND BACON DEVILLED EGGS

Preparation time 20 mins
Makes 12

6 hard-boiled eggs
⅓ cup mayonnaise
2 slices bacon, cooked, crumbled
2 tablespoons chopped tomato
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil
1 teaspoon yellow mustard
1 teaspoon vinegar
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
Cherry tomato slices, thinly sliced fresh basil, to serve

STEP 1 Carefully shell the hard-boiled eggs. Halve eggs lengthwise and remove the yolks. Set the whites aside. Place yolks in a small bowl and mash with a fork. Stir in the mayonnaise, bacon, tomato, basil, mustard and vinegar. Season.
STEP 2 Fill egg white halves with yolk mixture. Cover and chill until ready to serve, up to 24 hours. Top with tomato slices and thinly sliced basil.

WALNUT AND BLUE CHEESE STUFFED MUSHROOMS

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 20 mins
Makes 24

24 large mushrooms (5cm wide)
¾ cup dried breadcrumbs
½ cup finely grated parmesan
⅓ cup sour cream
2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus extra, to serve
2 cloves garlic, crushed
Black pepper, to season
60g crumbled blue cheese, plus extra, to serve
¼ cup chopped toasted walnuts
Canola or olive oil spray

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C fan-forced. Remove stems from mushrooms. Place mushrooms, stem sides up, in a 38cm x 25cm baking pan.
STEP 2 In a small bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, parmesan, sour cream, parsley and garlic. Season with pepper. Stir in blue cheese and walnuts. Spoon mixture into mushroom caps. Spray lightly with oil.
STEP 3 Bake 17–20 minutes, until light brown and heated through. Top with extra blue cheese and parsley.

PARTY PUNCH

Preparation time 15 mins plus overnight freezing
Serves 8

4 cups fruit juice, chilled, such as cranberry, apple, pineapple, tropical or mango (see tip)
1–2 cups rum, vodka or gin, chilled (optional)
2 litres ginger ale or sparkling lemon lime and bitters, chilled
1½ cups fresh or frozen berries or sliced fruit (see Cook's Tips)
Fresh mint, to serve
Ice ring, to serve (see below)

STEP 1 Just before serving, combine the fruit juice and alcohol (if using) in a large punchbowl.
STEP 2 Slowly stir in the carbonated drink. Add fruit, mint and the ice ring.

ICE RING

Use a 25cm ring mould pan or fluted jelly mould to make your ice ring. Add 2–3 cups fresh berries and chopped or sliced fruit (such as kiwifruit, citrus or pineapple), mint sprigs and orange rind. Pour in about 3 cups water to just cover the fruit. Freeze overnight or until frozen solid. To remove the ice ring, dip the base of the pan in a tray of warm water just until the ring loosens from the pan. Invert onto a tray, then carefully lower into the punchbowl.

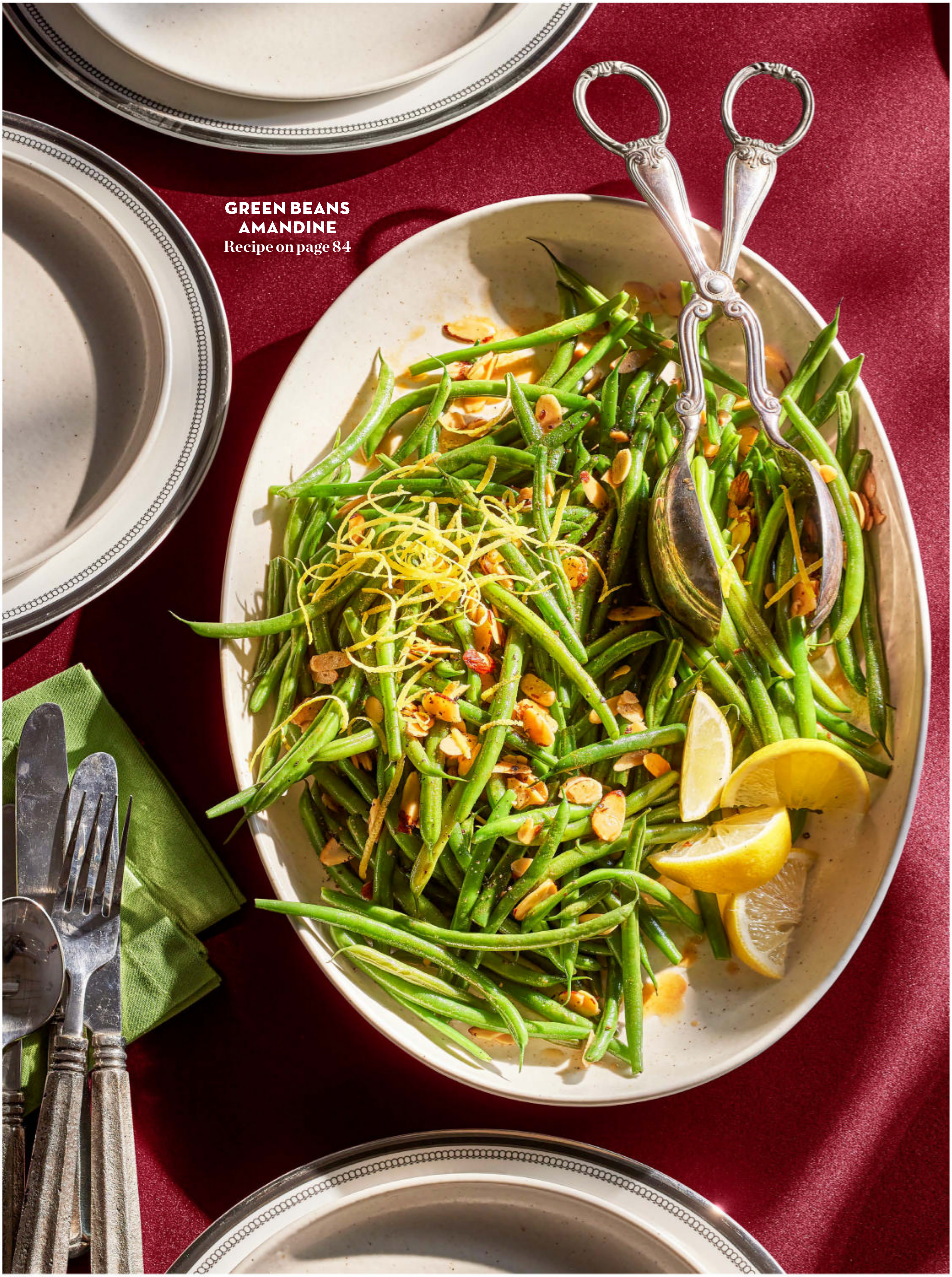
COOK'S TIPS

- Try a mix of fruit juice, such as cranberry and apple or pear, or pineapple and mango.
- Other fruits perfect for punch are kiwifruit, cherries, grapes, mango, peach, lychee and passionfruit.

CHANTILLY MASHED POTATO BAKE

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 55 mins
Serves 8

2kg Sebago or red skin potatoes, peeled, cut into 2.5cm cubes
125g salted butter, softened
6 slices rindless bacon, chopped
¾ cup milk, warmed
6 green onions, thinly sliced, plus extra, to serve



GREEN BEANS AMANDINE

Recipe on page 84

Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
300ml thickened cream
¾ cup shredded parmesan

STEP 1 Place the cubed potatoes in a large saucepan, cover with cold water and add salt. Bring to the boil over high heat. Cook, partially covered, for 20 minutes or until tender. Drain. Return the potatoes to the hot pan over medium heat. Shake the pan lightly, for about 1 minute, to evaporate excess water and dry the potatoes. Remove from heat.
STEP 2 Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan-forced. Use a little of the butter to grease an 8-cup capacity square baking dish.
STEP 3 Cook the bacon in a frying pan over medium-high heat for 4–5 minutes or until golden. Drain on a plate lined with paper towel.
STEP 4 Chop the remaining butter and add to the potatoes in pan. Mash potatoes until light and fluffy. Stir in the warm milk, three-quarters of the bacon and all the green onions. Season.
STEP 5 In a large bowl, whip the cream with a hand mixer on medium until stiff peaks form. Stir one-third of the whipped cream into the potato mixture until fully combined, then fold in remaining whipped cream. Transfer mixture to the prepared dish. Sprinkle cheese and remaining bacon over top.
STEP 6 Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes, until top is golden.
STEP 7 Let stand for 10 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with extra green onions to serve.

COOK'S TIP

The word "chantilly" is a vintage reference to dishes containing whipped cream. Whipped cream in mashed potatoes makes them oh-so-smooth and decadently rich.

GREEN BEANS AMANDINE

Preparation time 5 mins
Cooking time 8 mins
Serves 8

500g green beans, trimmed
60g unsalted butter, chopped
½ cup slivered almonds
Juice of ½ lemon
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
Finely grated lemon zest, to serve

STEP 1 Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil over high heat. Add beans. Cook about 3–4 minutes, until bright green and tender crisp. Drain. Wipe pan clean.
STEP 2 Return pan to the stove over medium heat. Add butter and almonds. Cook, stirring often, until almonds are light golden, about 3–4 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice. Add beans, toss to coat. Season. Transfer to a serving platter and top with lemon zest.

RASPBERRY AND CRANBERRY JELLY

Preparation time 45 mins plus 6½ hours or overnight chilling
Cooking time 10 mins
Serves 8

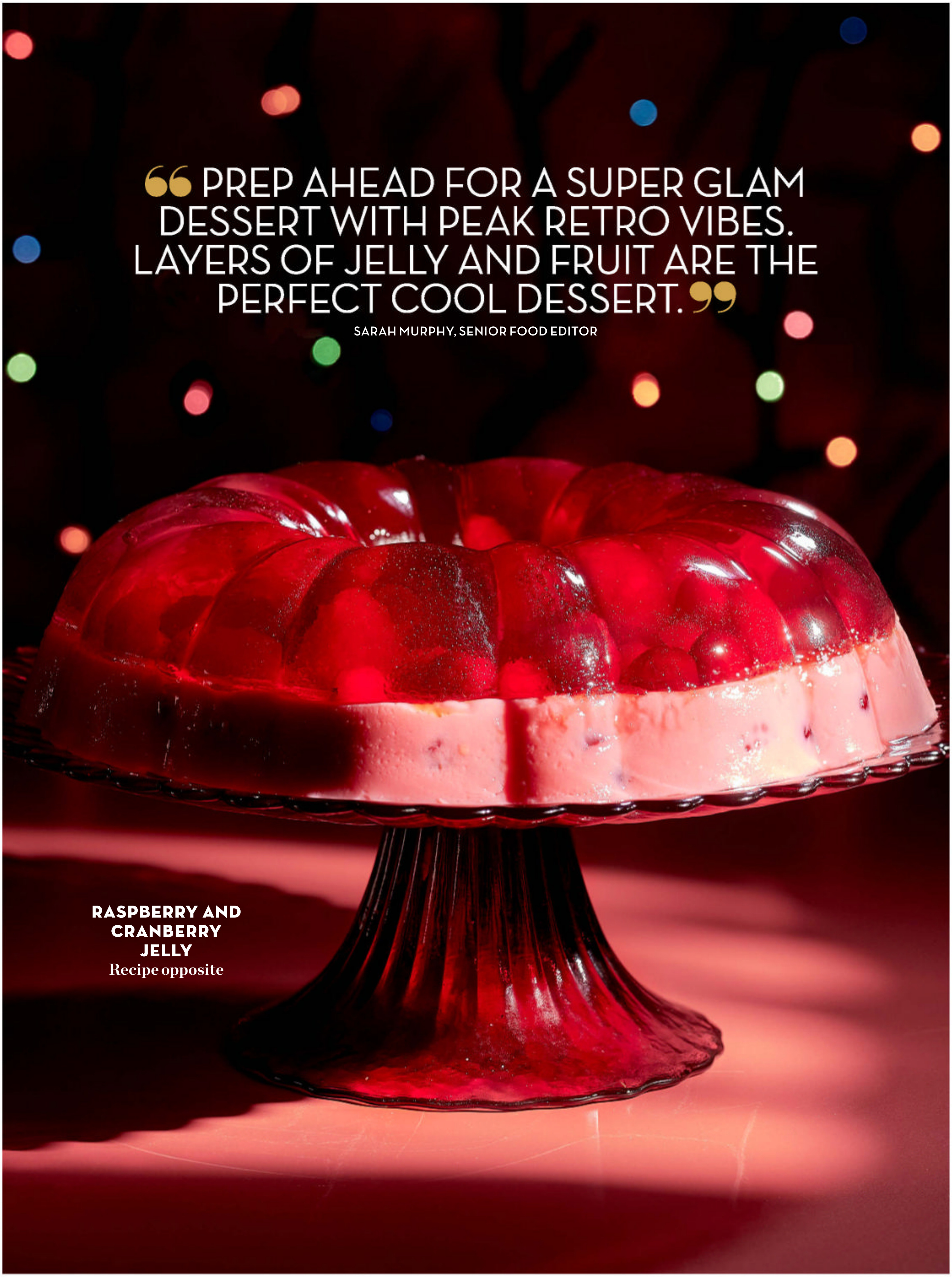
Canola oil cooking spray
2 tablespoons powdered gelatine
5 cups cranberry juice
2 x 85g packets raspberry-flavoured jelly crystals
1 cup water
1½ cups frozen cranberries, chopped
2 x 125g punnets fresh raspberries
395g can sweetened condensed milk, chilled

STEP 1 Lightly grease a 10-cup fluted jelly mould with cooking spray. Place the empty pan in the freezer to chill.
STEP 2 In a jug, sprinkle powdered gelatine over 1 cup of the juice, stir with a fork. Let stand for 5 minutes.
STEP 3 Heat remaining 4 cups juice in a large saucepan on medium-high heat until simmering. Remove from heat. Whisk in jelly crystals and gelatine mixture, whisking constantly until dissolved. Whisk in the water.
STEP 4 Set aside 2½ cups mixture at room temperature for the second layer. Pour remaining mixture into a large bowl. Refrigerate until mixture begins to thicken, about 1–1½ hours. Stir in 1 cup cranberries and half the raspberries. Pour mixture into prepared mould. Refrigerate for 1 hour or until set.
STEP 5 Once the first layer has set, whisk reserved 2½ cups jelly mixture and sweetened condensed milk together. Stir in remaining cranberries and raspberries. Pour evenly over the jelly fruit layer in the pan, spreading gently if necessary. Cover loosely with plastic wrap. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight if time permits.
STEP 6 To unmould, dip the base of the jelly mould in a bowl of warm water for about 30 seconds. Invert a chilled serving plate over the mould. Invert pan and allow gelatine mould to drop onto plate. (If necessary, loosen edges with a flexible silicone spatula to help it release.) Chill until ready to serve.

COOK'S TIP

This jelly is stunning on its own, but if you want to up the glam, you can pile a combination of strawberries, raspberries and blueberries in the centre of the jelly before serving. You can also pipe cream on the top before serving for extra indulgence.

> “PREP AHEAD FOR A SUPER GLAM DESSERT WITH PEAK RETRO VIBES. LAYERS OF JELLY AND FRUIT ARE THE PERFECT COOL DESSERT.”
>
> SARAH MURPHY, SENIOR FOOD EDITOR



RASPBERRY AND CRANBERRY JELLY
Recipe opposite

CHOCOLATE YULE LOG

Preparation time 45 mins plus 2 hours cooling
Cooking time 25 mins
Serves 8

1¼ cups pure icing sugar, plus 1 tablespoon extra
2 tablespoons plain flour, plus 1 teaspoon extra
2½ tablespoons cocoa
1 teaspoon instant coffee
6 free-range eggs, at room temperature, separated
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon sea-salt flakes, crushed

CHOCOLATE CREAM

250g cream cheese, softened
2 cups pure icing sugar, sifted, plus extra, to serve
¼ cup cocoa, sifted
600ml thickened cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

CHOCOLATE BARK

1 cup milk chocolate melts

SUGARED ROSEMARY & BERRIES

½ cup caster sugar plus 2 tablespoons extra
½ cup water
4 small rosemary sprigs
125g punnet raspberries

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Lightly grease a shallow, 38cm x 25cm swiss roll pan. Line its base and sides with baking paper, extending the paper over the edges of the pan. Place a large clean tea towel on the bench. Top with a sheet of baking paper. Sift over the extra 1 tablespoon icing sugar. Set aside.
STEP 2 Sift flour and cocoa powder together. Stir in coffee powder.
STEP 3 In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg yolks, vanilla and salt with a mixer on high speed until thick and creamy, about 5 minutes. Gradually add icing sugar, beating until combined.
STEP 4 Using a hand mixer, beat egg whites in a large bowl until stiff peaks form (tips stand straight). Fold about one-quarter of the beaten egg whites into the egg yolk mixture. Fold in remaining beaten egg whites. Sift the flour mixture over the egg mixture. Fold in gently until just combined. Spread batter evenly in the prepared pan.
STEP 5 Bake 20–25 minutes or until the top springs back when lightly touched. Immediately loosen the edges of the cake from the pan. Turn cake out onto the sugared paper. Carefully remove paper from the cake. Starting from a short side of the cake, roll the warm cake with the paper and tea towel into a swiss roll. Cool completely on a wire rack.
STEP 6 To make the chocolate cream, use a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Beat the cream cheese, icing sugar and cocoa on medium speed for 1 minute or until smooth and creamy, scraping down the sides of the bowl as needed, Gradually add thickened cream, beating on low speed for 1–2 minutes, until mixture is slightly thickened. Beat in vanilla until stiff peaks form. Cover and refrigerate until needed.
STEP 7 For the sugared rosemary and berries, combine sugar and water in a small saucepan on low heat. Stir until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil over high heat. Cook, without stirring, for 2–3 minutes. Remove pan from heat and let the syrup cool completely. Place extra caster sugar on a plate. Dip rosemary sprigs and raspberries, one at a time, into cooled syrup, allowing excess to drip off. Toss sprigs and raspberries in sugar to coat and place on a clean plate until needed.
STEP 8 Carefully unroll cooled cake roll. Spread with half the cocoa cream (about 2½ cups) to within 2cm of the edges. Roll up cake without the paper and towel. Place roll, seam side down, on a serving platter. Cover with plastic wrap and chill at least 30 minutes.
STEP 9 Meanwhile, to make chocolate bark, line a baking tray with baking paper. Place chocolate melts in a microwave-safe bowl, microwave on MEDIUM (50% power) in 30-second bursts, until melted and smooth. Spread chocolate in a thin layer (about a 20x30cm rectangle) over the paper. Refrigerate for 10–15 minutes, until set. Use a sharp knife to cut chocolate into 2cm-thick irregular strips.
STEP 10 Spread remaining chocolate cream over the log. Use a serrated knife to diagonally cut a 5–6cm slice off one end of the cake. Place diagonally cut edge of piece against the side of the longer roll on the serving plate. This forms a branch on the log. Use the cream to connect the branch to the log.
STEP 11 Decorate the yule log with chocolate bark shards. Store in the refrigerator. Dust with a little icing sugar just before serving.

COOK'S TIP

To make chocolate mushrooms, drizzle storebought mini meringue kisses with a little melted milk chocolate. Dollop a little melted milk chocolate to a white chocolate melt and attach to the top of the meringue. Set aside until set, then dust lightly with cocoa to serve.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ever wondered what a yule log actually is? It's a large log that is burned night after night during the 12 days of Christmas. This tradition may have ancient roots in celebrating the winter solstice. People have used yule log cakes (also known as Bûche de Noël) to commemorate the Christmas season since the 19th century. ■

CHOCOLATE YULE LOG
Recipe opposite

> “THIS CLASSIC CHRISTMAS DESSERT IS AN INDULGENT TREAT, PLUS THE LITTLE FROSTED BERRIES AND ROSEMARY ARE SUPER CUTE!”

SARAH MURPHY, SENIOR FOOD EDITOR

Punch it up!

Pull out the punchbowl and turn up the glam with these show-stopping party pieces.

Photography ADAM ALBRIGHT
Styling MARIAN COOPER CAIRNS

Festive spirits

The hosts of Christmases past knew that help-yourself refreshments freed them to mingle rather than play bartender. It's no wonder big-batch punches are back in style. If you're hosting over the Christmas season, try one of these recipes. They look fabulous and taste great, too!

Tasteful trimmings

Crown your punchbowl with a festive wreath of fresh rosemary or bay leaves.

1940s

Cranberry punch

Originally served hot and with floating cubes of butter (ideal to warm up in a northern hemisphere winter).We embraced the original black tea infused with citrus and spices but created a chilled drink that's ideal for an Australian summer. Spike it with a little rum for the grown-ups!

2010s

Pomegranate rosemary shrub

The shrub is back. Popular in the Colonial days, a shrub is made from fruit and a vinegary syrup. Our updated version stirs cranberry-pomegranate juice together with a healthy dose of red wine vinegar. The rosemary's piny notes complement the tart zing.

1960s

Spiced fruit punch

Bands of Christmas carollers traditionally had mugs of mulled cider to reward their singing. We loved this sweeter mix of pineapple, apricot, apple and orange juices so much that we didn't make any changes. It's delicious chilled to keep you cool during a hot Aussie summer.

Citrus cheer

Dress up your punchbowl with skewered cumquats. Wrap the ends of bamboo or wooden skewers with golden string or baker's twine.

1970s

Sparkling party punch

The '70s proved especially festive (read: boozy). We reduced the alcohol for our new version of a party punch but kept the (much-needed) sparkling water. Two bottles of bubbly, one moscato (our replacement for Sauterne), and a generous pour of Cognac still make this a potent concoction.

CRANBERRY PUNCH

Preparation time 10 mins
Cooking time 15 mins
Makes 5 cups

1.5 litres water
400g frozen cranberries, plus extra
½ cup caster sugar
2 cinnamon sticks
10 whole cloves
2 black teabags
½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ teaspoon finely grated orange zest
½ cup rum (optional)
Ice cubes, fresh bay leaves, to serve

STEP 1 In a large saucepan, bring water to the boil. Add cranberries. Simmer for 3–4 minutes or until skins burst.
STEP 2 Pour through a fine mesh sieve, pressing lightly on the cranberries. Discard solids. Return liquid to the saucepan. Stir in sugar, cinnamon and cloves. Bring to the boil, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Reduce heat to low. Simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes.
STEP 3 Remove from heat. Add teabags, lemon zest and juice, and orange zest. Let stand 3 minutes. Discard teabags. Stir in rum (if using). Cool completely, then chill until needed.
STEP 4 Transfer to a punchbowl. Serve with extra cranberries, ice cubes and bay leaves.

POMEGRANATE ROSEMARY SHRUB

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 1 hr
Makes 8 cups

1 cup water
½ cup caster sugar
4 fresh rosemary sprigs
1.5 litres cranberry-pomegranate juice
½ cup red wine vinegar
4 whole allspice berries
Ice cubes, orange slices, to garnish

STEP 1 In a small saucepan, combine water, sugar and rosemary. Bring to the boil, stirring, until sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. Set aside 1–2 hours.
STEP 2 In a large saucepan, stir together the rosemary syrup, cranberry-pomegranate juice, vinegar and allspice over medium heat until warm.
STEP 3 Remove rosemary and allspice. Let liquid cool, then chill until needed. Serve with ice. Garnish with fresh rosemary sprigs and orange slices.

SPICED FRUIT PUNCH

Preparation time 5 mins
Cooking time 20 mins
Makes 10 cups

1 litre unsweetened pineapple juice
1 litre apple cider or apple juice
375ml apricot nectar
250ml orange juice
2 cinnamon sticks
1 teaspoon whole cloves
¼ teaspoon whole cardamom seeds
Gold edible dust, crushed ice, sliced apple and cinnamon sticks, to serve

STEP 1 In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to low, then simmer for 15 minutes.
STEP 2 Strain. Discard cloves and cardamom. Cool completely, then chill.
STEP 3 Brush rim of a punchbowl with water, then brush with gold lustre dust. Transfer punch to the punchbowl. Serve with ice, cinnamon sticks and apple.

SPARKLING PARTY PUNCH

Preparation time 10 mins
Makes 15 cups

2 x 750ml bottles sparkling wine, chilled
750ml bottle moscato, chilled
1 litre sparkling water, chilled
1½ cups cognac
Cumquats, to garnish (see Cook's Tip)

STEP 1 In a punchbowl, mix sparkling wine, moscato, sparkling water and Cognac. Add cumquats on skewers.

COOK'S TIP

If you can't find cumquats, cut apricots or nectarines into wedges and thread onto skewers. ■

CLARISSA'S INDONESIAN CORN FRITTERS
Recipe on page 96

Cooking
with Colin & Clarissa

Bring bright and punchy flavour to these classic favourites.

Photography JOHN PAUL URIZAR *Styling* MICHELE CRANSTON

SEEN ON BHG TV
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CLARISSA'S THAI BEEF SALAD
Recipe on page 96

COLIN FASSNIDGE AND CLARISSA FEILDEL
Join us as we show you how to make delicious dishes on *BHG* TV, Fridays at 7pm on Channel 7.
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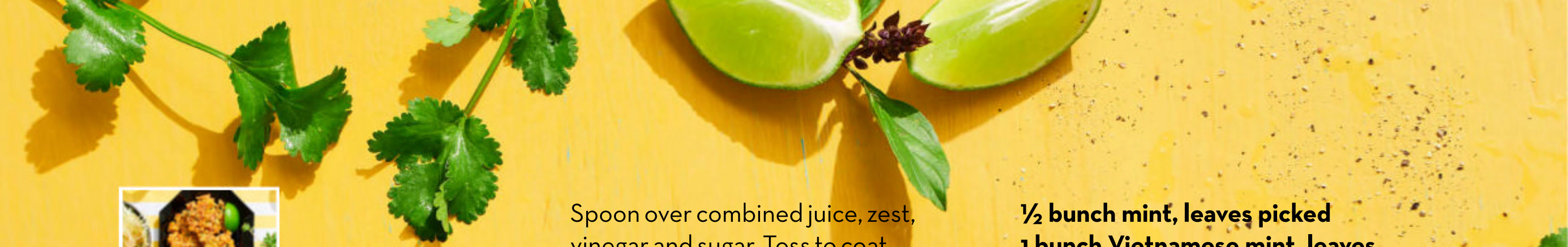
CLARISSA'S GOCHUJANG CHICKEN WINGLETS WITH CUCUMBER

Recipe on page 96

COLIN'S RUSTIC SHREDDED CHICKEN TERRINE
Recipe on page 98



CLARISSA'S INDONESIAN CORN FRITTERS

Preparation time 15 mins
Cooking time 20 mins
Serves 4

3 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
600g fresh corn kernels from 4-5 large cobs of corn
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 green onions, finely chopped
4 shallots, finely chopped
3 medium red chillies, diced (optional)
4 makrut lime leaves, finely chopped
½ cup chopped coriander leaves and stem
40g rice flour
80g plain flour
½ teaspoon ground coriander
½ teaspoon caster sugar
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
Vegetable oil, for shallow frying
Sweet chilli sauce, to serve (see tip)

NASHI AND CABBAGE SALAD

¼ cabbage, thinly sliced
1 large nashi pear, thinly sliced
1 bunch Vietnamese mint (or regular mint)
Juice and finely grated zest of 1 lime
2 tablespoons vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar

STEP 1 Combine egg, corn, garlic, onions, shallots, chilli, lime leaves and coriander in a medium bowl.
STEP 2 Add flours, coriander and sugar. Season. Mix well.
STEP 3 Pour oil to 2cm deep in a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Drop ¼ – ⅓ cups of mixture into the pan to make three fritters. Flatten slightly. Shallow-fry for about 2 –3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown. Remove to a wire rack. Repeat with remaining oil and batter.
STEP 4 For the salad, combine cabbage, pear and mint in a large bowl. Spoon over combined juice, zest, vinegar and sugar. Toss to coat.
STEP 5 Serve corn fritters with salad, lime wedges and dipping sauce of your choice.

COOK'S TIPS

- You can replace the makrut lime leaves with 2 teaspoons finely grated lime zest.
- To make your own lime and chilli sauce, combine ¼ cup sweet chilli sauce, ¼ cup sriracha, 1 clove crushed garlic and 1 tablespoon lime juice. Or to make sriracha mayonnaise, combine ½ cup mayonnaise and ¼ cup sriracha.

CLARISSA'S THAI BEEF SALAD

Preparation time 25 mins
Cooking time 10 mins
Serves 4

2 stalks lemongrass, trimmed and chopped
30 whole black peppercorns
2 cloves garlic
Salt, to taste
2-3 tablespoons peanut or olive oil
400g beef (sirloin/tenderloin/ ribeye), cut into strips
Crisp fried onions, to garnish

DRESSING

4 tablespoons fish sauce
3 tablespoons lime juice
2 tablespoons shaved palm sugar or brown sugar
2-3 birdseye chillies, finely chopped

SALAD

2 lebanese cucumbers, halved lengthways and sliced on diagonal
250g punnet cherry tomatoes, halved
1 large carrot, peeled and shredded
1 packet mixed salad leaves
1 red onion, thinly sliced
½ bunch Thai basil, leaves picked
½ bunch mint, leaves picked
1 bunch Vietnamese mint, leaves picked (optional)
¼ cup roasted peanuts or nuts of your choice

STEP 1 Place lemongrass, peppercorns, garlic and salt in a mortar and grind with a pestle to form a coarse paste. Heat oil in a wok over a high heat. Add paste and stir-fry for about 1–2 minutes, or until oil separates.
STEP 2 Add beef, spreading out to cover base and sides of wok. Cook, without stirring, for about 1 minute, or until beef is golden on one side. Stir-fry until just cooked. (Take care not to overcook beef.) Transfer to a plate.
STEP 3 For the dressing, combine dressing ingredients in a bowl.
STEP 4 For the salad, combine salad ingredients in a large shallow bowl.
STEP 5 Just before serving, add beef and peanuts to the salad. Spoon over dressing and toss gently to combine. Garnish with the fried onions.

CLARISSA'S GOCHUJANG CHICKEN WINGLETS WITH CUCUMBER

Preparation time 25 mins
Cooking time 40 mins
Serves 4

1.5kg chicken wing nibbles, or whole chicken wings (cut at joints)
¼ cup cornflour
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon Knorr chicken powder
1 teaspoon salt
Toasted black sesame seeds and sliced green spring onions, to garnish

SMASHED CUCUMBER

1 large continental or 3 lebanese cucumbers
¼ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon soy sauce
½ tablespoon rice wine

COLIN'S SPICED GREEN EGGS
Recipe on page 100

1 teaspoon sesame oil
Pinch sugar
Handful of fresh coriander leaves
1 teaspoon toasted white sesame seeds, to garnish
Chilli oil, to taste

SPICY SAUCE
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2.5cm fresh ginger, finely grated
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon mirin or rice vinegar
¼ cup gochujang (Korean chilli paste)
1 tablespoon sesame oil

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 240°C/220°C fan-forced. Line a rimmed baking tray with baking paper and top with a wire rack.
STEP 2 Pat chicken wings dry and place in a large bowl. Add cornflour, paprika, chicken powder and salt. Toss to evenly coat. Arrange wings on rack and cook for 30–40 minutes or until golden and crispy. Cut into bite-size pieces.
STEP 3 Place the cucumber onto a chopping board. Using a rolling pin or meat mallet, smash cucumber at different points down its length, enough to crack it open. Cut crosswise into bite-sized pieces. Transfer to a bowl. Add remaining ingredients and toss well to combine.
STEP 4 For the spicy sauce, heat oil in a saucepan on medium heat. Add garlic and ginger. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes or until tender. Add honey, soy, vinegar and gochujang. Cook, stirring, on medium-low heat for 5 minutes, or until the sauce thickens slightly. Remove from heat and stir in sesame oil.
STEP 5 To serve, combine hot wings and hot sauce. Toss to coat well. Garnish with sesame seeds and green onions. Serve with smashed cucumber.

COLIN'S RUSTIC SHREDDED CHICKEN TERRINE

Preparation time 1 hour plus overnight chilling time
Cooking time 3 hours
Serves 6–8

8 chicken marylands
750ml duck fat
750ml extra virgin olive oil

TERRINE
1 bunch tarragon, leaves picked, chopped
1 bunch sage, leaves picked, chopped
1 bunch flat-leaf parsley, leaves picked, chopped
¼ cup baby capers, drained, chopped
100ml sherry vinegar
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper
Toasted or grilled sourdough slices, to serve

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 110°C/90°C fan-forced.
STEP 2 Arrange the chicken in the base of a large flameproof casserole dish. Pour over the duck fat and oil, cover with a lid or foil. Bake for 3 hours or until the meat falls easily off the bone. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.
STEP 3 Remove chicken from cooking fat. Pick meat from bones in small pieces. Discard fat and bones.
STEP 4 Combine chicken, herbs, capers and vinegar in a large bowl. Season. Line a 1-litre capacity terrine mould or serving dish with plastic wrap. Spoon chicken mixture into prepared dish, pressing down firmly to remove any air bubbles.
STEP 5 Fold overhanging plastic wrap to enclose filling. Top with a tray and weight down to help compress terrine. Refrigerate overnight.
STEP 6 Before serving, turn the terrine onto a board. Slice and serve with toasted or grilled sourdough.

COOK'S TIPS

- You can replace the duck fat and olive oil with vegetable oil.
- Use cans of tomatoes etc to weigh down the terrine.

COLIN'S CHOCOLATE AND AVOCADO MOUSSE

Recipe on page 100

COLIN'S SPICED GREEN EGGS

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 5 mins
Serves 3–4

6 free-range eggs
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 birdseye chillies, finely chopped
1 clove garlic
1 teaspoon finely grated ginger
½ bunch coriander, leaves picked and stalks finely chopped
Sea-salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon sesame oil

SALAD FILLING

2 cups bean sprouts
1 cup rocket leaves
½ bunch mint, leaves picked
1 birdseye chilli, finely chopped
½ bunch coriander, leaves picked and stalks finely chopped
2 teaspoons fish sauce
Juice of 1 lime
20g roasted peanuts, chopped

STEP 1 For salad filling, place sprouts, rocket, mint, chilli and coriander in a large bowl. Add fish sauce, lime juice and nuts. Toss to combine.
STEP 2 Place eggs, spices, chilli, garlic, ginger and coriander in a blender. Season. Blend until combined.
STEP 3 Heat sesame oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Pour in egg mixture. Using a spatula, pull the omelette's outside into the middle so the mixture cooks evenly.
STEP 4 When the base starts to set, cook, without stirring, for 1 minute. Do not overcook; eggs should still be soft.
STEP 5 Spoon the salad filling onto the centre of the omelette. Using a spatula, fold the omelette over to enclose the filling and slide onto a serving plate.

COLIN'S CHOCOLATE AND AVOCADO MOUSSE

Preparation time 25 mins plus overnight chilling time
Cooking time 10 mins
Serves 4

3 small ripe avocados (600g total)
2 ripe bananas (285g total)
½ cup dark cocoa powder
⅓ cup honey
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 tablespoon crème fraîche, plus extra to serve

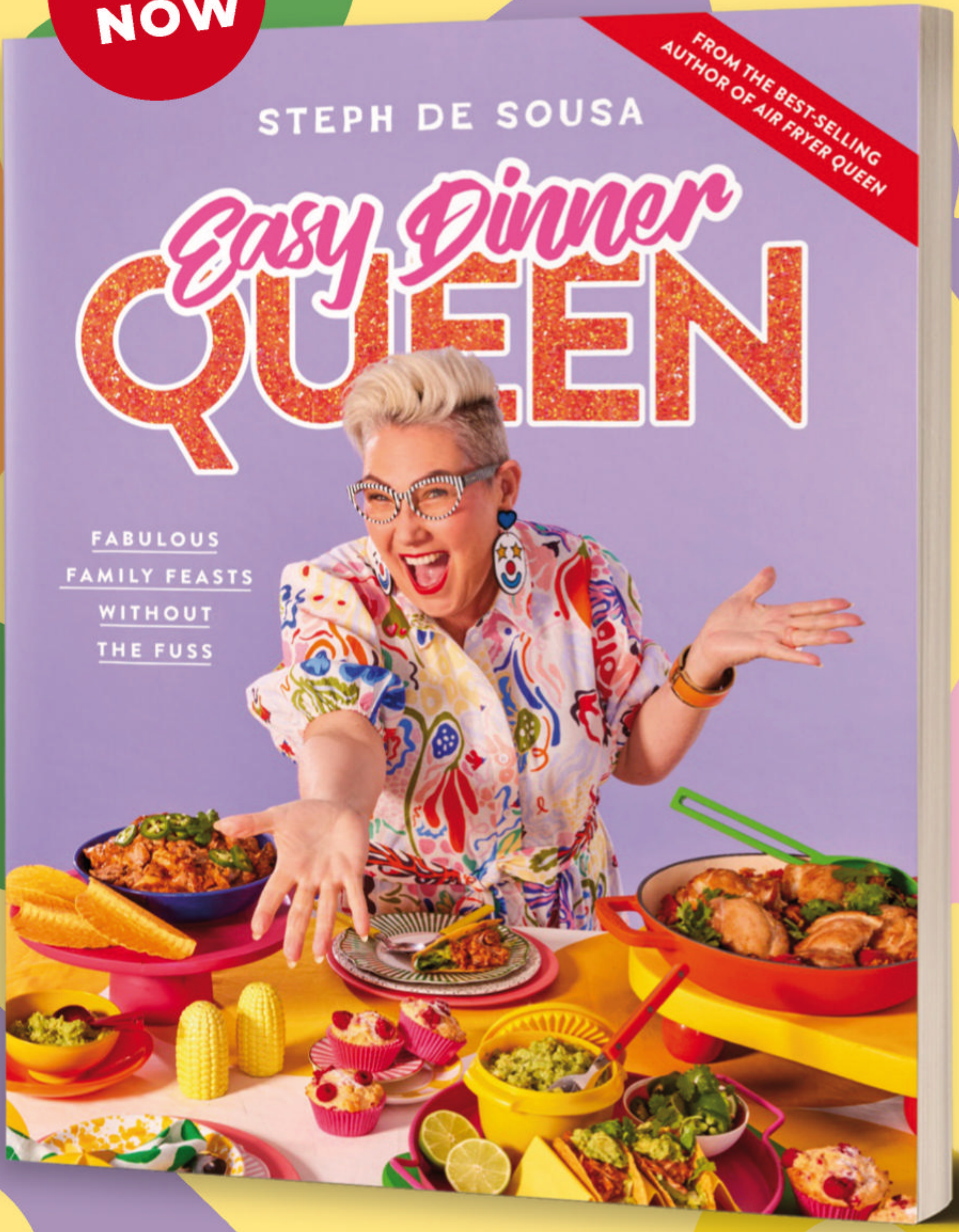
PRALINE

125g combined pecans, pistachios and macadamia nuts, toasted
½ cup caster sugar
2 tablespoons water

STEP 1 Slice avocados in half and remove the seed. Scoop out flesh, reserving skins for serving option.
STEP 2 Process avocado, banana, cocoa powder, honey, vanilla and crème fraîche in a large food processor until smooth. Transfer mixture to a bowl or a large serving dish. Chill for 6 hours or overnight, until firm.
STEP 3 For the praline, line a baking tray with baking paper. Scatter with nuts. Combine sugar and water in a saucepan on low heat. Increase heat to high. Cook, stirring, until sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil and boil, without stirring, for 5–7 minutes or until golden brown. Pour over the nuts on the prepared tray. Cool.
STEP 4 Scoop mousse into serving glasses to serve, or scoop into reserved avocado skins to serve.
STEP 5 Break praline into pieces. In a food processor, pulse to a rough crumb. Just before serving, sprinkle the praline over the mousse. Serve with extra crème fraîche. ■

Food preparation Tamika O'Neill

OUT NOW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Easy Dinner
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dinner for one

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SWEET & SOUR PORK

Preparation time 20 mins
Cooking time 10 mins
Serves 1

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
150g pork scotch fillet, cubed
½ red capsicum, seeded, thickly sliced
2 green onions, cut into 4cm lengths, green tips shredded, to garnish
1 garlic clove, crushed
1 teaspoon finely grated ginger
½ teaspoon five-spice powder
70g sugar snap peas, trimmed
2 rings pineapple, roughly chopped
½ carrot, cut into julienne strips
Steamed rice, to serve

SAUCE
2 teaspoons Chinese cooking wine (Shaoxing)
2 teaspoons sweet chilli sauce
2 teaspoons hoisin sauce
2 teaspoons soy sauce
2 teaspoons malt or rice vinegar

STEP 1 For the sauce, combine all ingredients in a small jug.
STEP 2 Heat oil in a frying pan on high heat. Stir-fry pork 3–4 minutes, until golden and cooked through. Remove pork from pan. In the same pan, stir-fry capsicum, onion, garlic, ginger and five-spice powder for 30 seconds. Add sugar snap peas and stir-fry for 1 minute.
STEP 3 Add pork, sauce and pineapple to the wok. Stir-fry 2 minutes until sauce simmers. Toss carrot through. Serve with rice. Sprinkle on green onion garnish. ■

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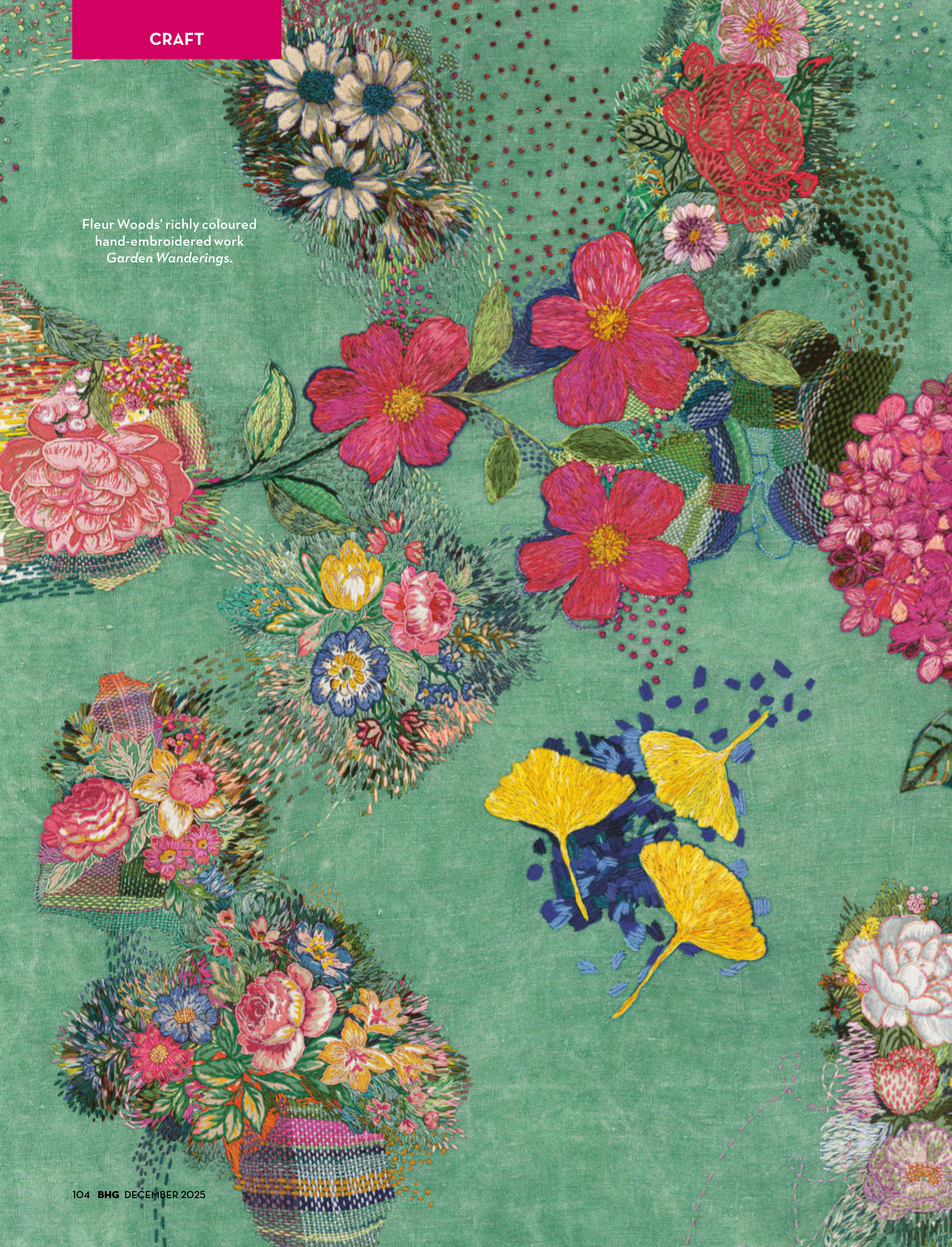
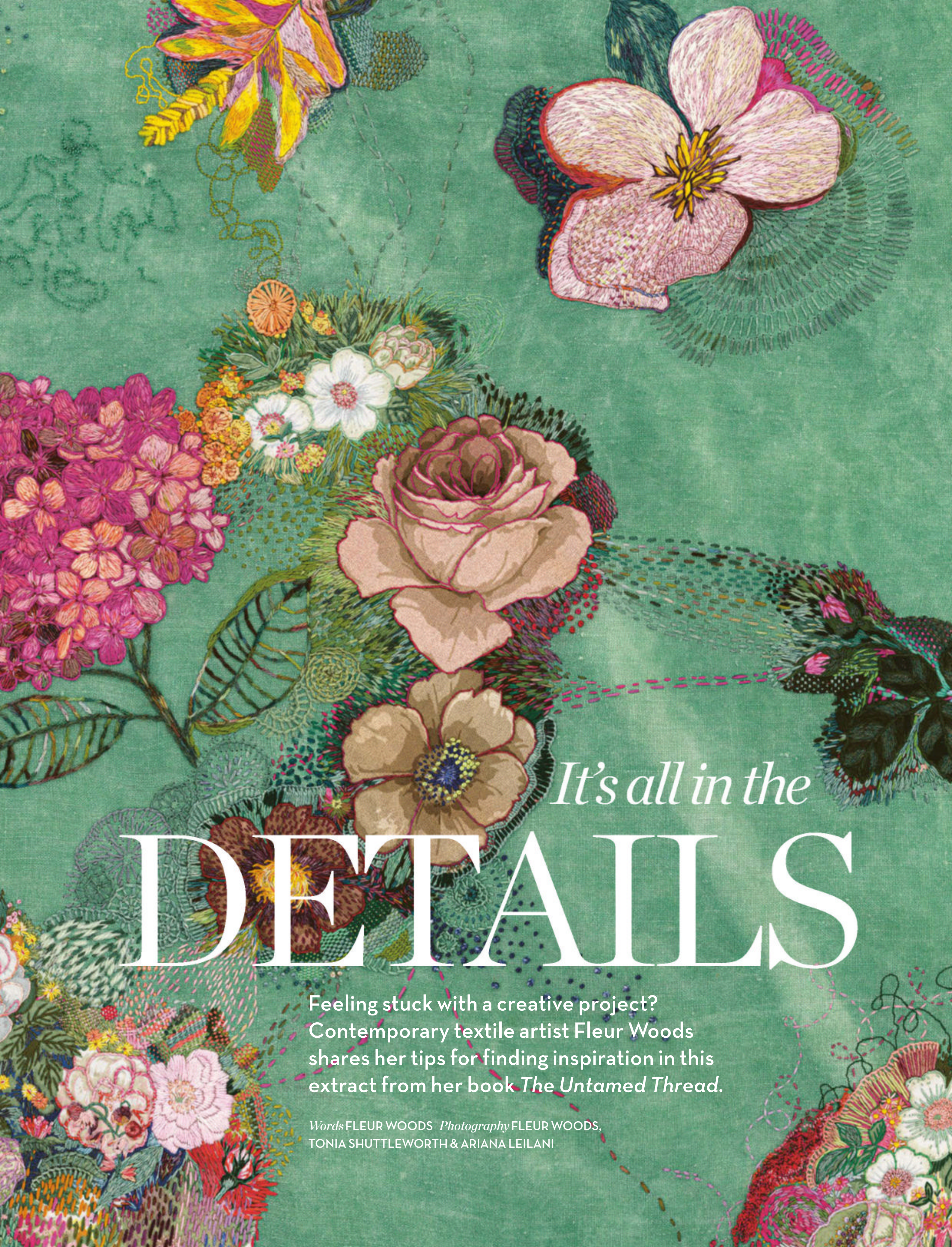


Fleur Woods' richly coloured hand-embroidered work *Garden Wanderings*.



It's all in the DETAILS

Feeling stuck with a creative project? Contemporary textile artist Fleur Woods shares her tips for finding inspiration in this extract from her book *The Untamed Thread*.

Words FLEUR WOODS *Photography* FLEUR WOODS, TONIA SHUTTLEWORTH & ARIANA LEILANI

New Zealand-based fibre artist Fleur Woods calls herself a "detail geek". She takes inspiration from nature to produce incredible embroidered and painted works that are full of colour, soul and fine details. But she admits it's thanks to this attention to detail that it's "much harder for me to finish an artwork than start one".

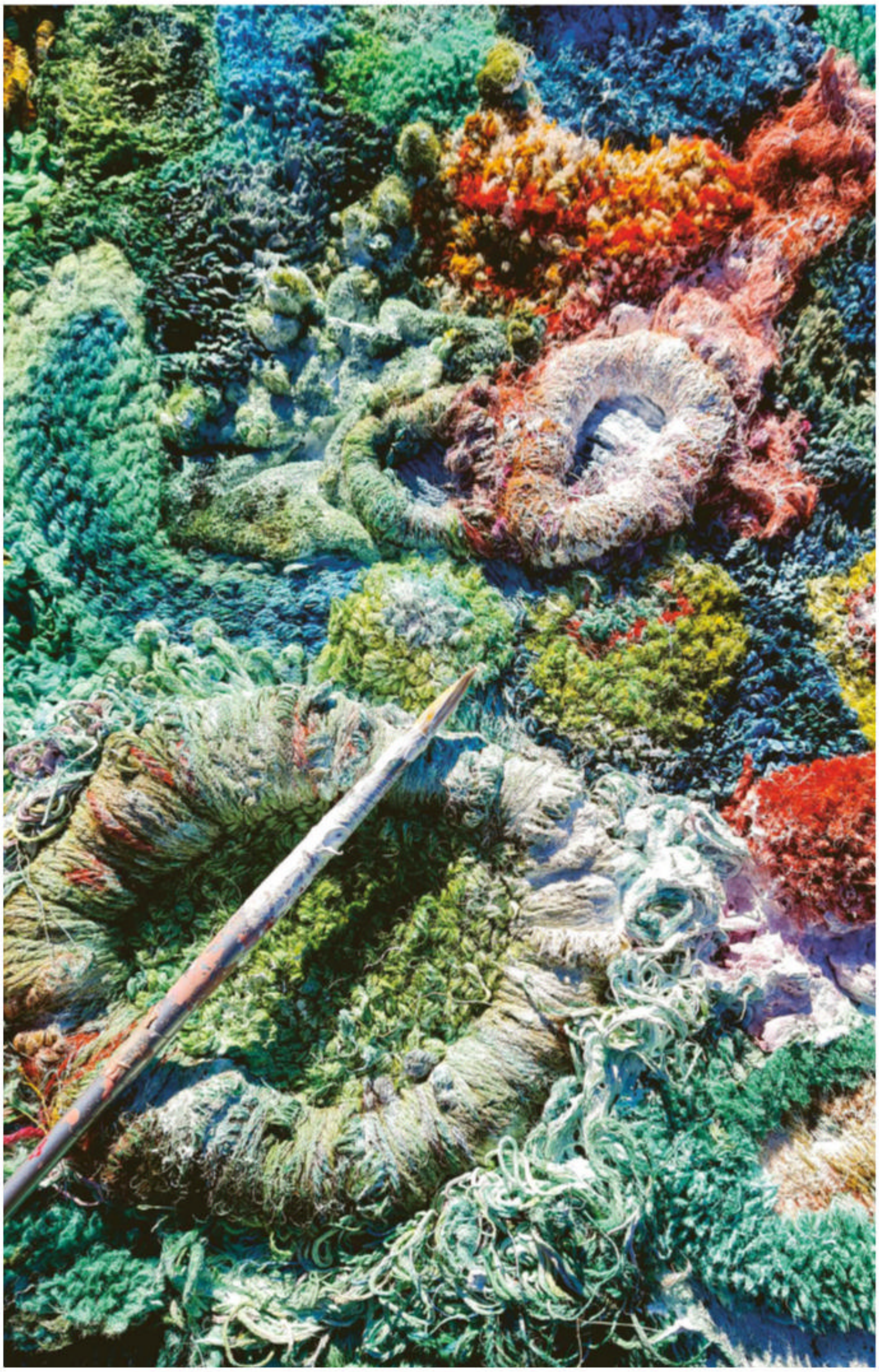
Yet she also knows from experience that you shouldn't give up too soon. Put your work aside and come back to it with fresh eyes, she advises.

"A firm deadline can help, but working back in and adding detail is the most inspiring and illuminating part of the process for me. It has become such a joy that it helps me ride the waves of uncertainty, and gets me through all the boring bits. I know there is fun to come and plenty of 'aha' moments at that stage.

"I know it can be a few subtle additions that can shift a work from awkward to triumph... It doesn't have to make sense to anyone else, just to you. I love to make little scattered trails from flower to flower in lots of my pieces, sometimes using a Kantha stitch or scattered French knots; this is

> “A FEW SUBTLE ADDITIONS CAN SHIFT A WORK FROM AWKWARD TO TRIUMPH.”
>
> FLEUR WOODS

ABOVE Fleur Woods found embroidery pieces at op shops that she included in her mixed media works, then started stitching herself. **OPPOSITE PAGE** She will lay out garden flowers to create a pattern.



> “I HAVE ALWAYS APPROACHED STITCHES AS AN EXTENSION OF PAINTING.”
>
> FLEUR WOODS

ABOVE “Sometimes when I need to bring an artwork together, painting over the entire piece is a risk I don’t mind taking,” says Fleur. **OPPOSITE** Fleur emphasises that “it’s the detail that defines and refines your work”.

not an obvious representation of something I saw in the garden but rather an expression of the feeling of life and abundance.”

Here she shares her tips for finding inspiration, motivation and, above all, what she describes as “freedom and joy in the creative process”.

Stitch back into the work using one colour

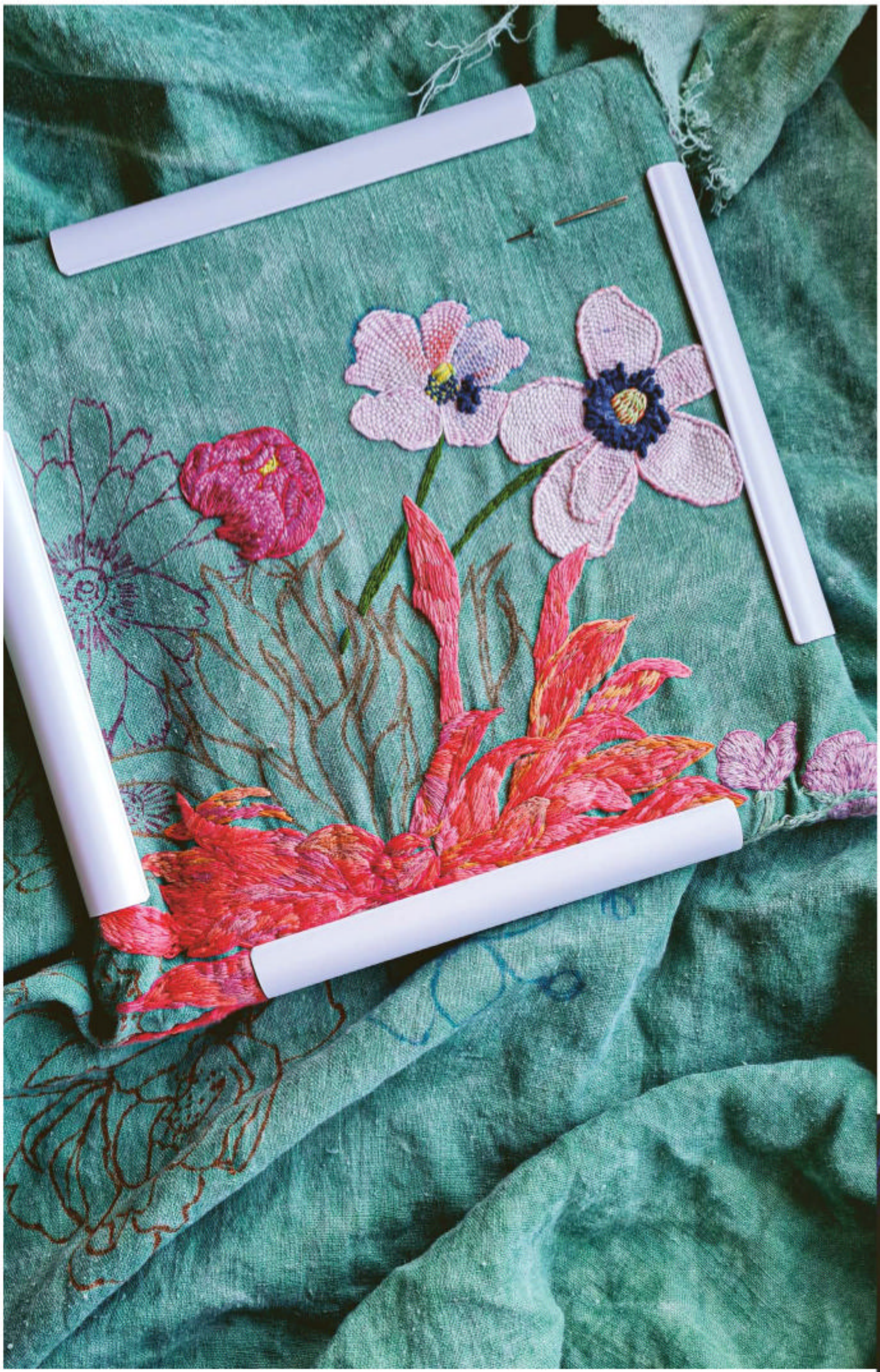
It might be that this colour already exists in the piece or is a new wildcard. Adding this colour to borders, details and the background can allow the eye to follow the visual more comfortably and create a sense of harmony.

Add a scatter of stitches or beads to the background in a similar colour to the fabric

Sometimes you’ve created a beautiful flower that seems unintentionally suspended in space. Your instinct might be to add a stem or something illustrative to ground it in place, which could be a good option. The other is to cluster and scatter French knots of varying sizes throughout the background or add some patches of weaving, scattered beads or a directional Kantha stitch. Sometimes it doesn’t need to be a literal interpretation of nature but rather a whimsical element that brings energy to the work.

Crop the work

When you have been creating wild and free, the result can sometimes transition unknowingly in a new direction which despite being beautiful can create confusion. Sometimes you can end up with two works in one. Cropping (typically by cutting) to retain the area that feels successful will remove the area you are unsure about. And remember, nothing is ever lost. You can repurpose the area you’ve removed by bringing it into a textile collage or a textural piece in the future.



The same can work with expanding your area – you might start in a hoop but realise the work needs to grow, so add it to a new piece of fabric in a larger frame and continue.

Smooth the lumps

We love the texture, but sometimes as you're exploring it, there can be lumps and bumps that are less intentional and end up bothering you. This is not a call for neatness but rather an encouragement to leave those areas be while you're progressing through the work and know you can come back in later with more layers and detail to make the lumps disappear, or become a feature. I do this by using three strands of cotton/silk or other fine threads to tack down the stitches that bother me. You can make this look intentional by clustering your tacking stitches or adding them everywhere rather than just the lumpy patches.

Change colours

Sometimes I find a colour I've chosen earlier no longer works. I'll work back over it with another colour and build up texture, or decide to commit and bring more of

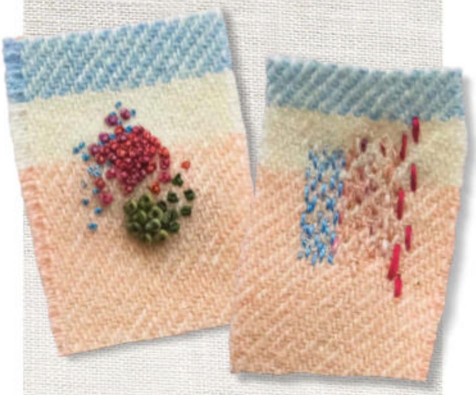
> “WHENEVER I FEEL CREATIVELY STUCK, MY RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IS TIME IN NATURE.”
>
> FLEUR WOODS

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE *Summer Blooms* highlights Fleur's favourite flowers: poppy, yarrow, anemone and peony. It also explores textures with weaving, French knots and various threads.

it into other areas of the piece. Often, if it's only in one place, it will stand out; you can balance the scales by bringing more in.

I have been known to throw caution to the wind and adjust the colour of a work by dyeing or painting over the entire piece. This often happens when I don't know what to do with it, and it is very much a gut feeling I have learnt to trust. It's not always a perfect science, but it usually works out well.

> "MAKING MY OWN RULES HAS HELPED ME TO INNOVATE AND ... HAS ALLOWED ME TO EMBRACE JOY IN THE PROCESS."
>
> FLEUR WOODS

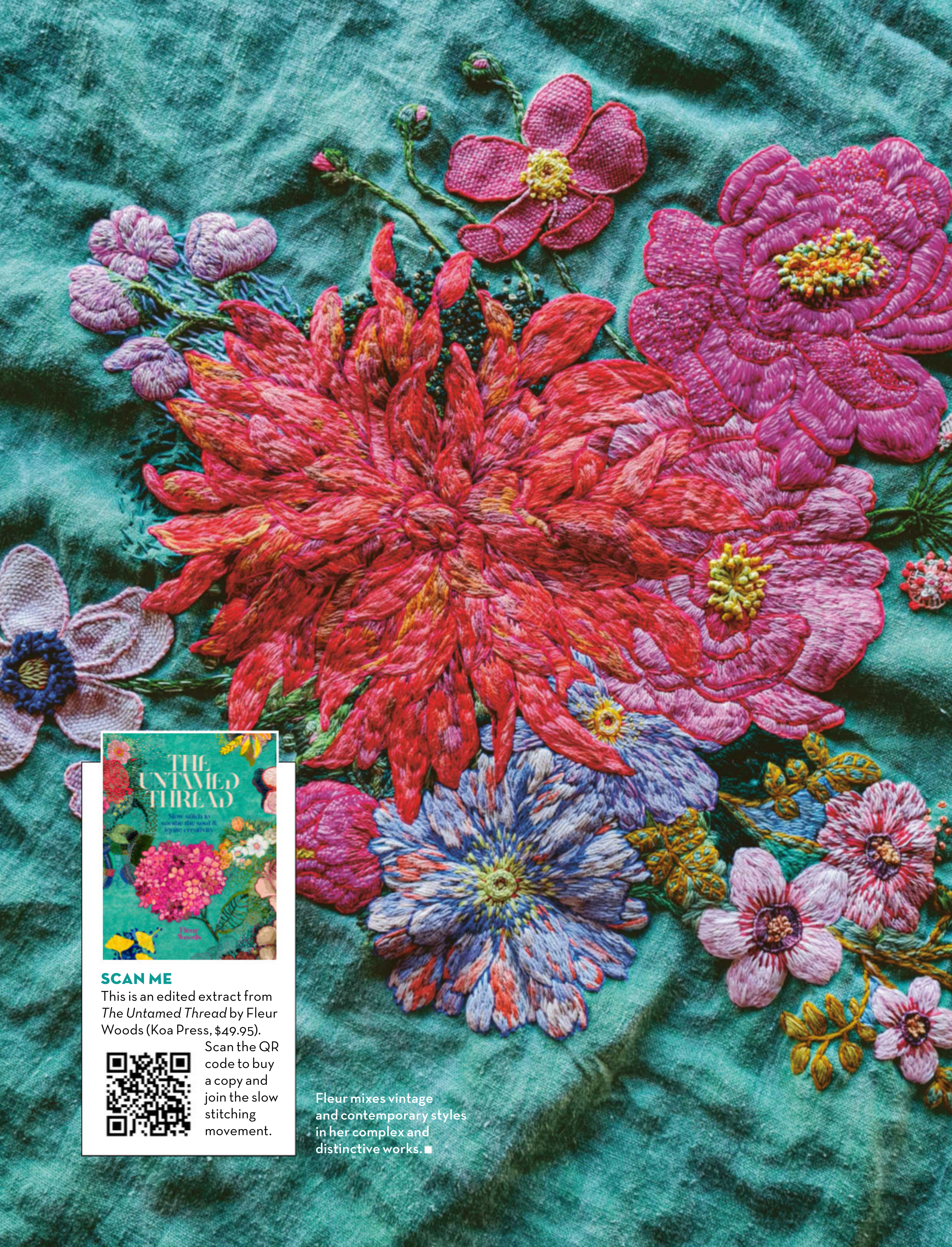


FLEUR'S BASIC STITCHES

FRENCH KNOTS: "This stich has become one of my favourites. I love it for the centres of flowers, clusters of texture or simply some scattered detail to communicate a sense of movement or energy," says Fleur. "My tip for mastering French knots is to place your hoop or frame on the table so you can use both hands, one to hold the tension of the thread and the other to use the needle. It can feel fiddly initially but once you get the hang of it, you will have hours of fun."

KANTHA STITCH: "This stitch is a pleasure to do for its simplicity, but I also find it excellent for adding directional marks to link the eye from one area to another. Also known as a running stitch, this simple in and out stitch is best done with a long darning needle. I also use my chenille needles for this."

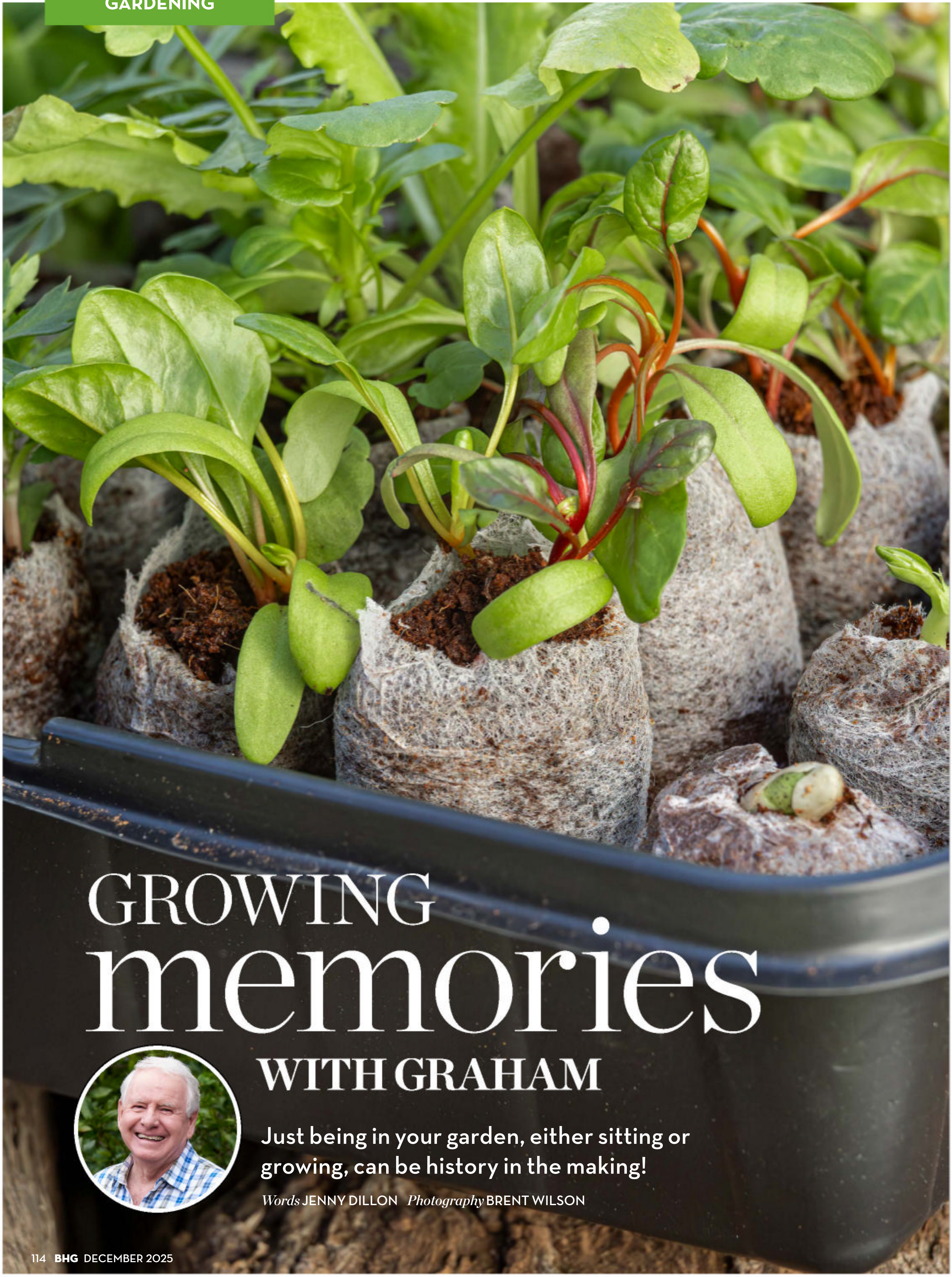
Find more stitch tips in Fleur's book, *The Untamed Thread*.



SCAN ME

This is an edited extract from *The Untamed Thread* by Fleur Woods (Koa Press, $49.95). Scan the QR code to buy a copy and join the slow stitching movement.

Fleur mixes vintage and contemporary styles in her complex and distinctive works. ■



GROWING memories WITH GRAHAM

Just being in your garden, either sitting or growing, can be history in the making!

Words JENNY DILLON *Photography* BRENT WILSON

Flowers in the vegie patch mean produce is on the way! In this case it's a bounty of peas that can be eaten straight from the pods.

GRAHAM ROSS
Join me as I show you how gardening can bring so much joy to your life on *BHG* TV, Fridays at 7pm on Channel 7. For more garden tips, go to
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Bagging your tomatoes protects them from bats and possums.

Gardening is a way to create lasting memories. It's something that engages all your senses. You see seedlings turn into beautiful blooms, smell their fragrances, feel the texture of different types of foliage, listen to the sound of rustling leaves and taste sweet strawberries, juicy apples or fresh-as-you-please peas straight from the pod to your mouth.

Repeating those experiences years down the line can trigger those memories. You may think of a past summer holiday when you take in lavender's perfume, or a time you tasted stonefruit fresh from the tree.

When I see roses, I instinctively look for the prickles – as a child I'd break them off, lick the bases, stick them on my nose and scare my little sisters by growling at them that I was a wicked witch. My mother got annoyed with me, but I thought it was funny.

In an age of instant gratification, growing food or flowers from seeds takes you back to when your grandparents had the time and patience to do this. As more of us live in the city, community gardens have sprung up to cope with the changing times. They encourage harmony, cooperation and a sense of belonging. They also become a place where memories are made. Young people learn to garden, then carry those experiences through to their adult years, eventually passing on their skills to a new generation of memory makers.

Graham Ross recently visited Wentworthville Community Garden in Sydney's western suburbs, where local families are building community and connection through gardening. Propagating and seed planting are just some of the regular activities that whole families enjoy.

Passing gardening skills on to the next generation helps create lasting memories.

Peas are ready to to be harvested about 60 days after sowing seeds. If the pods are plump and the peas feel firm when you gently press them, it’s time to pick away!

EASY STEPS TO PROPAGATING WITH CUTTINGS

My sisters, now grown up, all have a hoya propagated from the one our mother grew in her garden. On the day of our father's funeral, I went into the garden to cut sprigs of rosemary for them – for remembrance. Rosemary is easy to propagate with softwood cuttings in mid to late spring or semi-hardwood cuttings in late autumn/early winter. Follow these steps with Graham to multiply your own rosemary plant. JENNY DILLON, GARDEN EDITOR

FOR PROJECT SUPPLIES, SEE STOCKISTS ON PAGE 188.

Gather your supplies

- Propagating mix
- Hormone powder or gel
- Small coir pots, 8cm or 11cm diameter
- A rosemary bush

You'll also need

Clean sharp secateurs; dibber; water.

Here's how

STEP 1 Using secateurs, cut sprigs of rosemary about 10–15cm long just below a node – this is the bump on a stem from which leaves emerge.

STEP 2 Remove the bottom leaves, leaving those at the top.

STEP 3 Fill coir pots with propagating mix.

STEP 4 Dip the cut stems in hormone powder or gel.

STEP 5 Create a well in the centre of the mix with a dibber or your finger. Insert one cutting in an 8cm pot. Pat gently in place.

STEP 6 If you have more cuttings, repeat Step 5, but make four wells in one 11cm pot.

STEP 7 Water and put in a warm spot, protected from breezes. Keep the mix moist until planting out in the garden.

STEP 8 You can plant the single cutting in its pot direct into your garden soil in a sunny spot. After 4–6 weeks, when roots have been established, the coir pot will break down, and the plant avoids transplant shock.

STEP 9 For the four cuttings, check that roots are established by gently tugging sprigs. If there's resistance, roots are growing. Gently remove from pot and plant 60–100cm apart.

Growing from seed

Not every seed is the same, so read the seed packet instructions carefully. It will tell you the best time of the year to sow based on your climate, and what aspect that plant variety needs to thrive. The packet will likely also have instructions on whether to plant directly into your garden bed or grow in a seed-raising mix.

Some seeds need to be soaked overnight, because in nature they'll only sprout after heavy rain softens the tough outer coating. Others need scarification to break dormancy, so you rub them with light sandpaper. This imitates the treatment they get in the wild when they're scratched by the feet of wildlife. Others need intense heat or smoke to germinate. This is common with many of our natives – you'll often see the bush spring into life again after fires.

SCAN ME
Scan the QR code to see Graham Ross's visit to Wentworthville Community Garden.

My dad had me sowing sweet pea seeds with him from when I was four years old. I have triple memories with that experience. Firstly, I was amazed that these tiny little things, these seeds, would grow out of the soil to a height of 2 metres, to the top of our wooden paling fence, and as a bonus, produced hundreds of flowers my mother cut for indoors, their perfume being an extra indelible memory to this day.

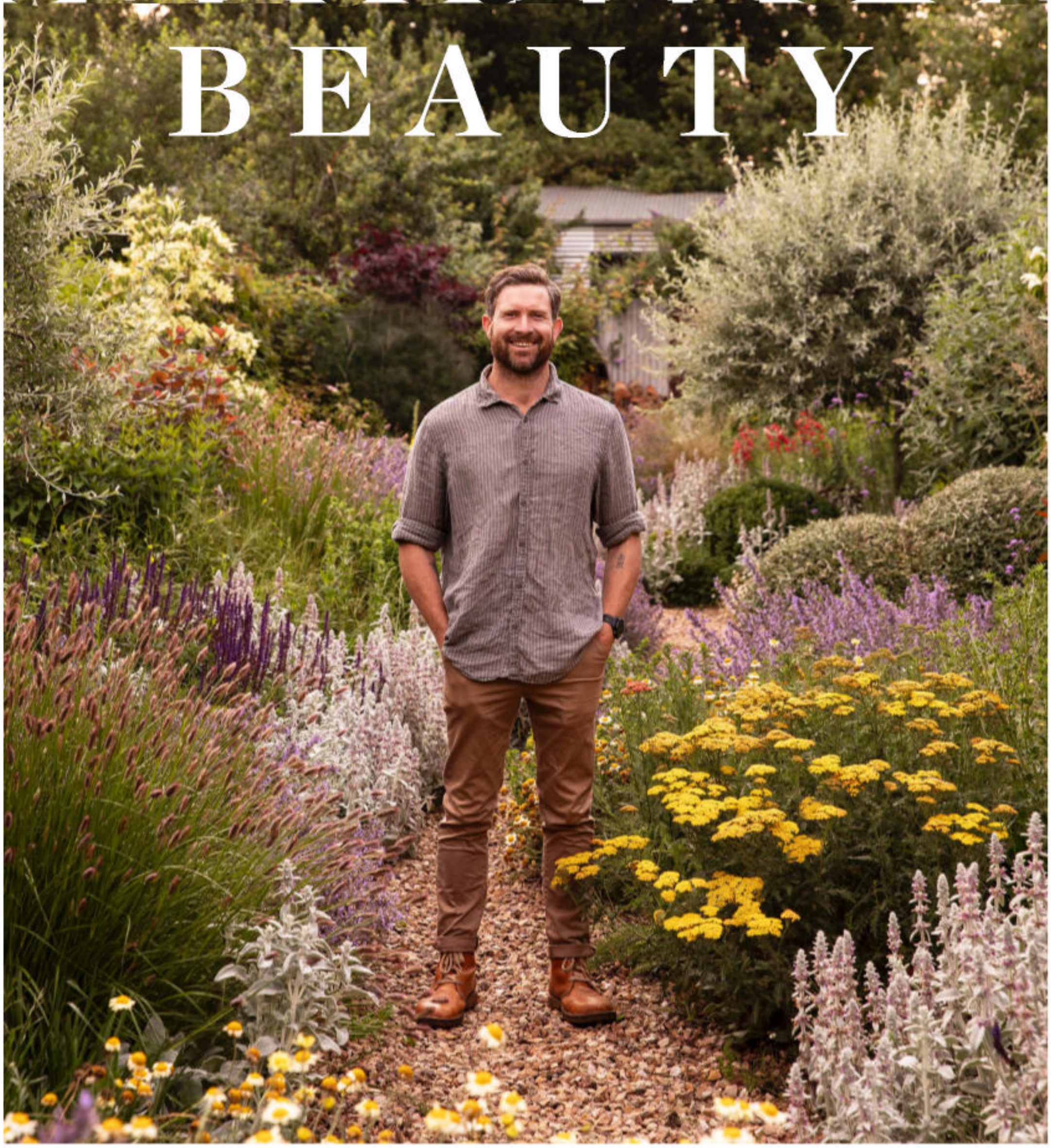
Secondly, it showed me patience and the rewards that come when everyone gets to enjoy the floral bounty.

Thirdly, it was a memory etched on my mind of my father's love to show me the process of sowing the seeds, which, I might add, I'm still practising many decades later and sharing with my grandchildren. But also, his love for my mother.

As they say, memories are made of this.

GRAHAM ROSS, HORTICULTURIST

untamed BEAUTY



Tim Pilgrim celebrates a gardening approach that sees beauty in the untamed. Enjoy the sweet surprise of going a little wild in your own plot.

Garden designer Tim Pilgrim explores the wilder side of gardening in his first book, *Wild By Design*, from Murdoch Books. Tim has a naturalistic approach and a deep understanding of how plantings work in real life. He looks at a site's climate, its landscape, strengths and weaknesses, then composes a garden that will flourish there. In this edited extract from his book, he shares his tips for naturalistic plantings in gardens of any size.

Words TIM PILGRIM *Photography* MARTINA GEMMOLA

This garden is respected as a wildlife habitat and is in sync with the rhythm of the seasons.

large GARDENS

Large gardens: 1000 sq metres and up
Country gardens, acreage farms

ABOVE Match the untamed nature of your plantings with reclaimed wood and metal. **RIGHT** Use natural elements such as stone to build retaining walls and steps – they sit easily on the land, as though they have always been there.

1 **Divide your garden into rooms.** 'Rooms' are a traditional way of thinking about gardens, and in large spaces they can make a lot of sense. Divide your spaces with hedgerows, hedges or trees that double as windbreaks and shelter. Dividing spaces like this can focus a view and add drama.

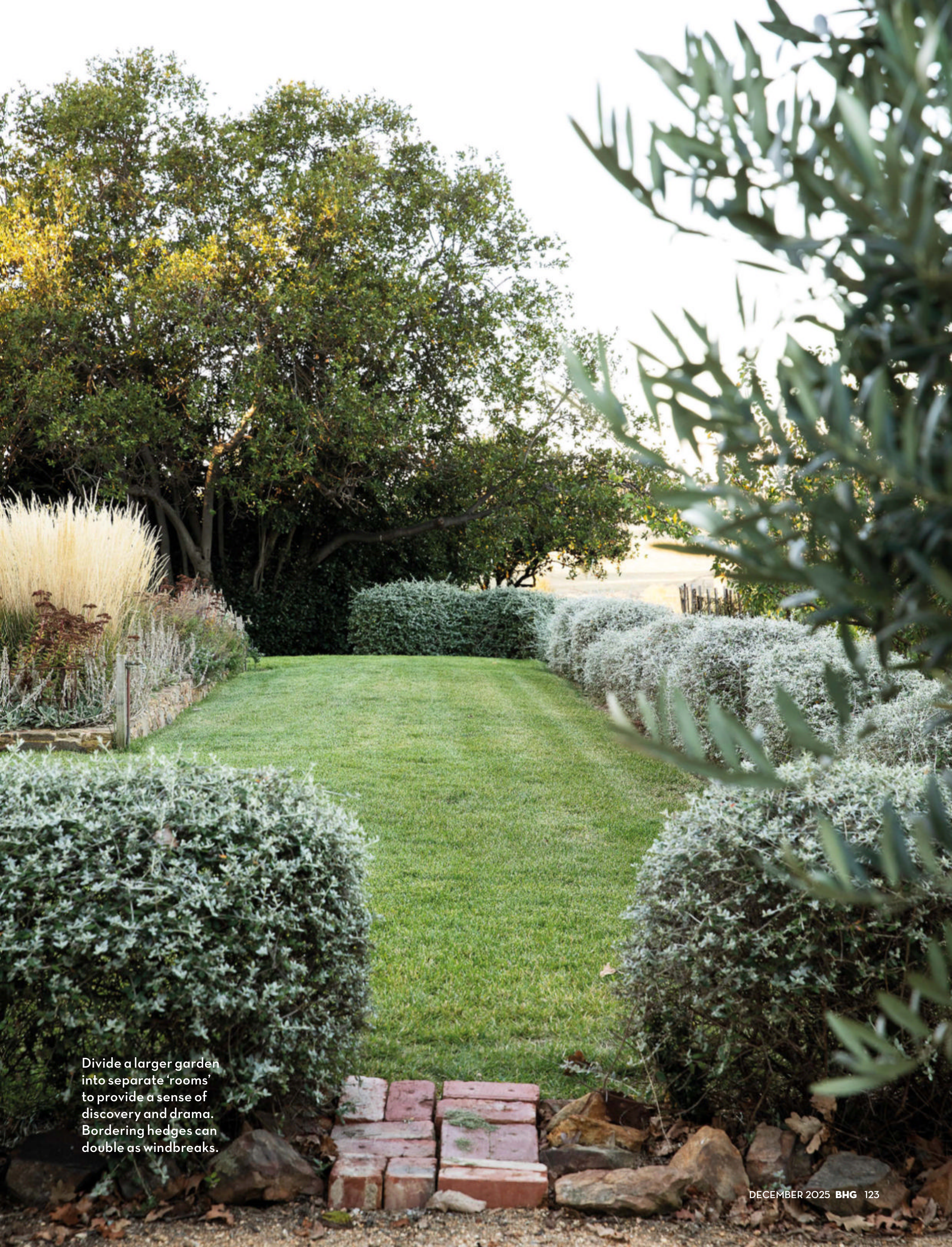
Take advantage of the climatic differences across your property and choose appropriate themes for them. Use heat-adapted or native plants in dry west-facing areas, water-loving plants in low-lying drainage areas, and woodland-style plantings in shaded areas.

2 **Consider scale and proportion.** Giving consideration to your house, other buildings, and existing trees and outlooks, use plantings to balance the masses and voids to settle your garden into its surroundings. The farther out from the house, the larger your drifts, the higher your plantings and the wilder your garden should be.

3 **Create a journey.** It's hard to know where to start, and analysis paralysis can set in quickly! The simple answer is to start from the house and work your way out. As you begin to connect your garden areas, via paths, lawns and openings, try to create a loop or circuit around your garden. This will have the effect of luring you on to the next experience, and it creates a journey around your garden as opposed to a dead end where you are forced to turn around.

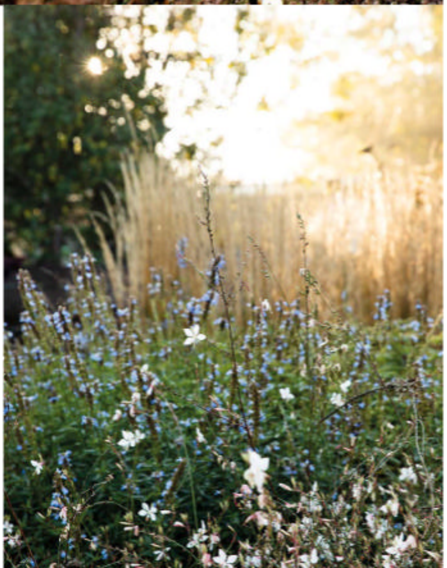
4 **Value maturity.** Before you clear the slate of an old garden for a new one, consider what the existing vegetation can provide for you. I always favour pruning, thinning or lifting the canopy of existing trees or shrubs before I decide to take them out completely. Even if you can't turn them into the specimens you would like, they often serve the functional purpose of providing shade, habitat, food and shelter for wildlife and for humans. They also give a garden maturity and provide valuable instant height to the remainder of the garden.

5 **Consider colour.** Hot, intense colours such as reds, oranges and yellows will hold your attention close. This can be good in places that are intimate, perhaps where you are entertaining or dining close to the house. Cooler, more relaxed colours recede into the landscape, reflecting light and shadows, and help pull your gaze into the garden or wild landscape beyond.



Divide a larger garden into separate 'rooms' to provide a sense of discovery and drama. Bordering hedges can double as windbreaks.

medium GARDENS



TOP RIGHT Take advantage of next door's landscape and 'borrow' it. **ABOVE** A curved, meandering path allows your garden to flow and to have wider beds. **RIGHT** Putting in tall plants amid low-growing ones adds depth and a different rhythm.

Medium gardens: 400–1000 sq metres
Suburban gardens, country-style gardens

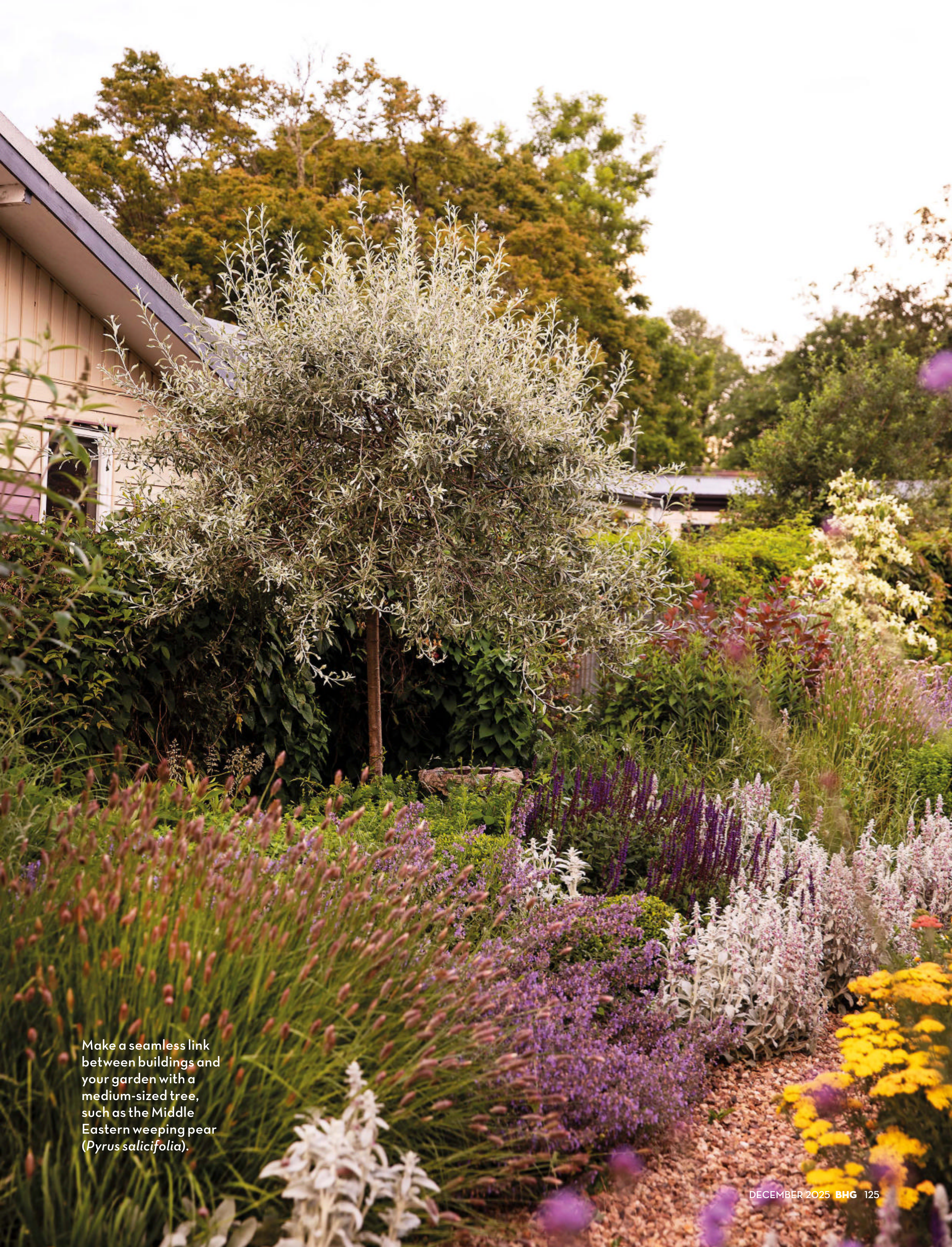
1 **Use repetition in your planting.** Stick to a single planting palette where you can. Repeat blocks of plants in an alternating pattern either side of a path or bed. This helps to draw your eye through the garden and into the distance.

2 **Design curved or winding paths.** Curved paths will add depth to your garden beds, allowing for diversity in your planting. This is especially helpful on narrow sites, where a straight path would seem too formal and would not allow for varying heights and effects in the planting. Curves will add allure, drawing you on to see what's around the bend.

3 **Use height.** This adds depth to your planting and provides a rhythm through the garden. Use it to control the intimate moments in your garden where you want to be held and immersed.

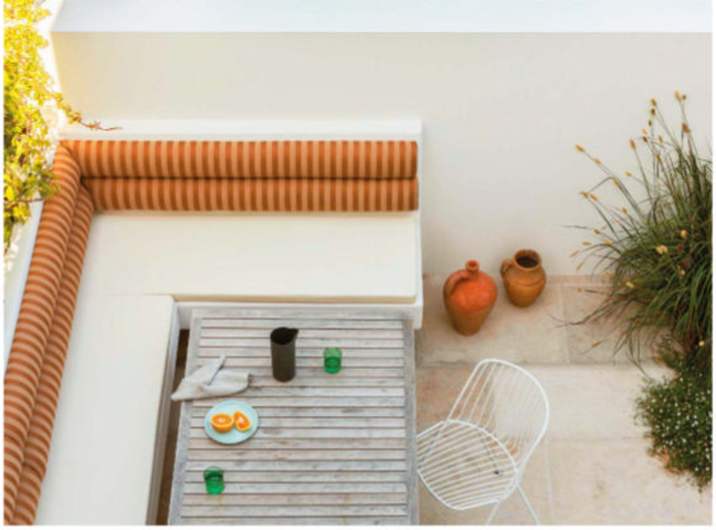
4 **Identify the different aspects in your garden.** You may have a number of microclimates – pockets of shade, patches of baking sun, and damper or drier spots. Plant appropriately, but keep the scheme the same using similar colours, patterns and shapes.

5 **Encourage self-sowers.** Allow plants to self-sow and naturalise in paths and in the cracks of paving and walls, but first make sure they aren't weeds in your local area. Self-sown plants can add an instant feeling of wildness. Edit out plants that become too pushy or large, and make this part of your naturalistic garden management every year.

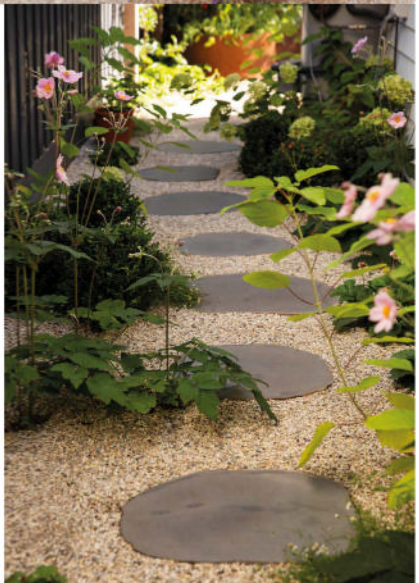


Make a seamless link between buildings and your garden with a medium-sized tree, such as the Middle Eastern weeping pear (*Pyrus salicifolia*).

small GARDENS



Small gardens: Up to 400 sq metres
Courtyards, terrace gardens and city gardens



TOP RIGHT Pots and urns can add visual interest. **ABOVE** You can use tall ornamental grasses to bring movement to a smaller plot. **RIGHT** Using curves in narrow spaces allows for deeper planting pockets.

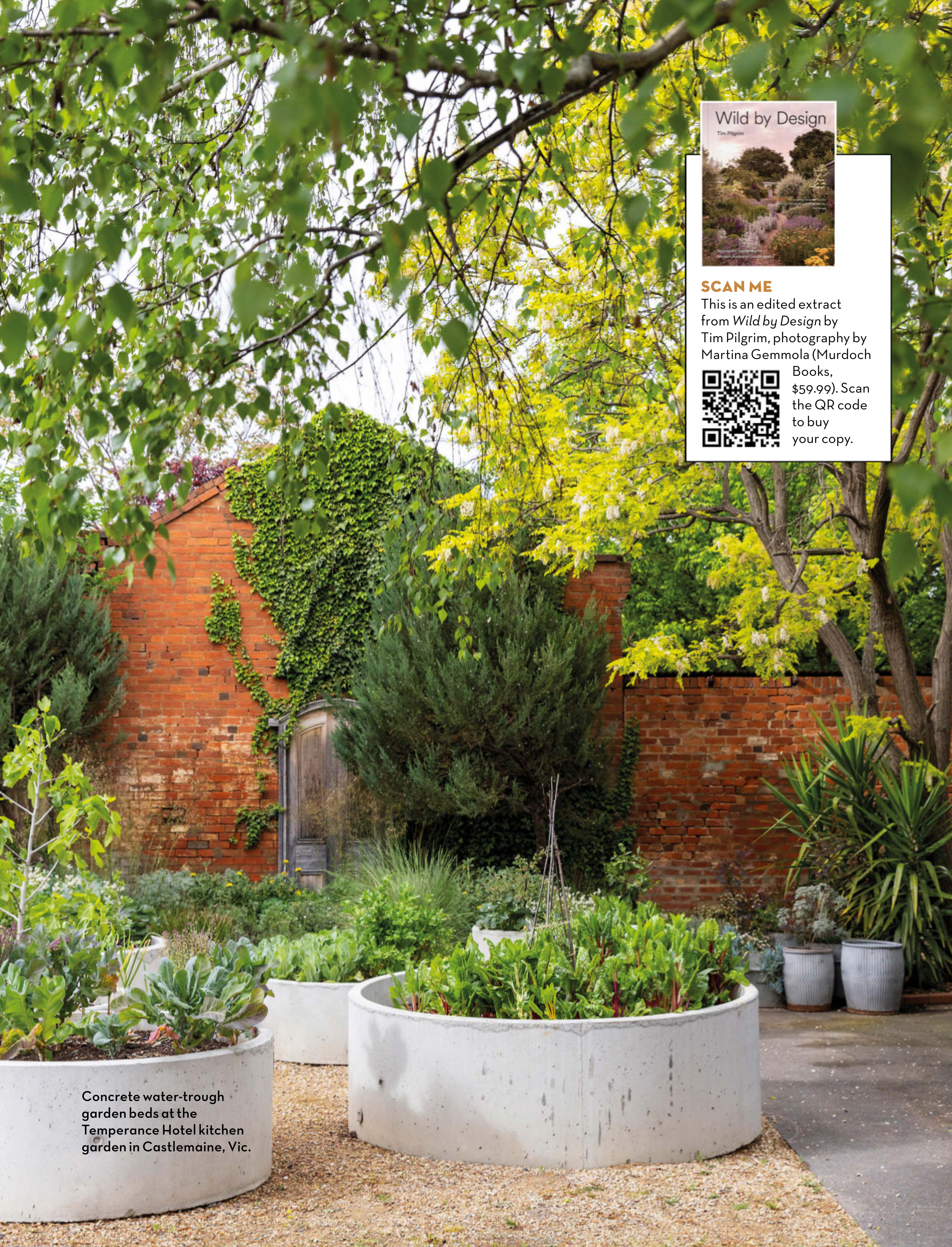
1 Make your 'places to be' dual purpose. Use foldable furniture you can mix and match and swap out depending on your event or mood. Swap a bench seat for a table and chairs or a small firepit. If the only space you have for a garden is the parking space, make it do double duty – you could add permeable paving, plants in pots, and even a living carport or overhead vine-covered trellis.

2 Choose plants with multiple seasons of interest. This is never more important than in small spaces. If you have room for just one tree, make sure it has nice flowers in spring, appealing foliage later in summer, and good autumn colour. If it's deciduous, then make sure it has interesting bark or good structural form (such as smoke bush or Chinese pistachio). Make the same assessment for every plant you choose: think foliage form, colour and contrast, flower, seed heads, and structure into decay or dormancy.

3 Keep the colour palette simple. Too many colours in a small space can make it feel cluttered and confused. You want to make the space feel bigger, so restrict yourself to a few colours in different shades. Repeat them with greens throughout the plantings to create a garden that feels spacious, cool and calming.

4 Make every millimetre count. Layer your planting using a matrix of plants that have their season of interest one after the other. Think about how these different layers will flower or are highlighted throughout the year. In small gardens there isn't room for large drifts or block plantings, so plant groups of no more than three plants.

5 Embrace pots. These can add height and interest even in the dead of winter. They also allow for trees and other high plantings on balconies or other hard surfaces, making use of your available space. ■



SCAN ME

This is an edited extract from *Wild by Design* by Tim Pilgrim, photography by Martina Gemmola (Murdoch Books, $59.99). Scan the QR code to buy your copy.

Concrete water-trough garden beds at the Temperance Hotel kitchen garden in Castlemaine, Vic.

The Name Game

What were popular names for pets in decades past? And what do they reveal about us?

Words CAROLINE ZAMBRANO

Each pet's name is a reflection of the bond we share and the memories we make with our furry friends. And just like music, fashion and hairstyles, pet names follow trends and tell the story of the times we lived through, like a little time capsule.

The post war era of the 1950s and '60s was a period of social, cultural and economic change, when Aussie pets were essential workers. Dogs with names such as Rover, Spot and Duke often guarded the backyard or helped out on the farm, while cats kept the mice away.

By the 1970s and '80s, TV and music had taken over Australian lounge rooms, and pet names began to follow the stars of the day – think Rocky, Elvis or Scooby.

In the 1990s, giving dogs and cats human names had become the norm, reflecting the growing sense that pets were family members with personalities of their own. It was common to hear Max and Jack being called at the park, or to find Lucy and Oscar curled up on the lounge.

Since the 2000s, we've got more creative and personal with our pets' names, with food-inspired choices such as Pickles and Brownie, along with playful monikers such as Winnie or Ziggy. Then came the pun-filled gems – I mean, who could resist a Sherlock Bones? We also fell for colour and trait-based names like Misty and Smoky.

The most popular names among the latest generation of cats and dogs are Luna, Milo, Coco and Bella – no doubt many who are pampered pets who sleep on our beds and even have their own Instagram following!

Pet names are more than just labels; they're memory keepers, capturing the spirit of each era and reminding us of all the Buddies, Cleos and Lolas who have been part of our families along the way.

Photography Adobe Stock. Prices are approximate and a guide only.

PET GEAR WITH A RETRO STYLE

1. Handcrafted from reclaimed Tasmanian oak flooring, the Premium **D.O.G. Bed, from $399-$649,** from Once Over Melbourne, has retro-patterned cushions filled with luxuriously soft polyester stuffing derived from recycled plastic bottles.

2. Turn back time in style with a **Bailey & Bone Groovy Garden pet ID tag, $36.95,** crafted from lightweight aluminium.

3. With its handwoven curved design, the **Cat Pod by Catkea, $299,** brings comfort and style to your feline's sleeping spot.

4. Princess Highway's Renee small pet lead, $28, has a bold 1970s-inspired floral print. There's also a matching dog collar, $8, complete with a side-release buckle.

5. Made of first-grade harness leather, **Angus Barrett Saddlery's leather cat collar, $60,** and leather working dog collar, $70, are built to last. They're completed with a stainless steel buckle and ring.

6. Bring a playful twist to walk time with **Nelson & Co's check collars, $40,** crafted from durable cotton canvas for comfort and longevity.

7. Finally, a work of art your cat can sink their claws into! **Catkea's The Cat-Vinci Scratching Frame, $169,** is an innovative, durable and pet-safe wall-mounted scratcher that doubles as a piece of decor.

8. Keep your pup cosy with the **Nelson & Co Chai Spice flannelette coat, $45** for medium size. ■

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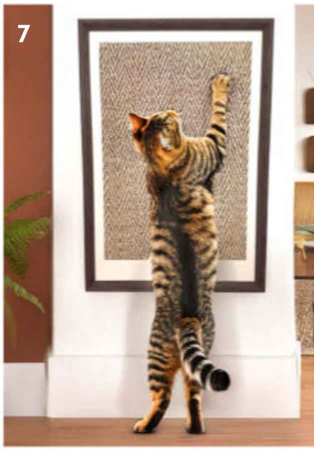
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SCAN ME
Scan this QR code to shop these items.

Travel through time

Visit beautiful historic houses around Australia.

Words SOPHIE AL-BASSAM

Photography Samuel Shelley

Stay among the vineyards

WHAT Grand Georgian home Prospect House was commissioned in 1830, with 21 convicts living in the basement and helping to build the house and work the land. Winemaking family the Pooleys, whose Butcher's Hill vineyard lies adjacent to the estate, bought Prospect House in 2017 and turned the historic building into an 11-room luxury hotel.

WHERE Coal River Valley in Richmond, Tasmania, just a 20-minute drive from Hobart.

TRY Visit the on-site Buscombe's Restaurant, particularly for the monthly dinners that celebrate produce from the local surrounds. Dishes are matched with wines from across Tasmania, including from Pooley Wines.

POOLEY
TASMANIA
PINOT NOIR

SCAN ME
Visit the Pooley Wines cellar door, conveniently located in Prospect House's renovated coach house.

Photography Chris Groenhout

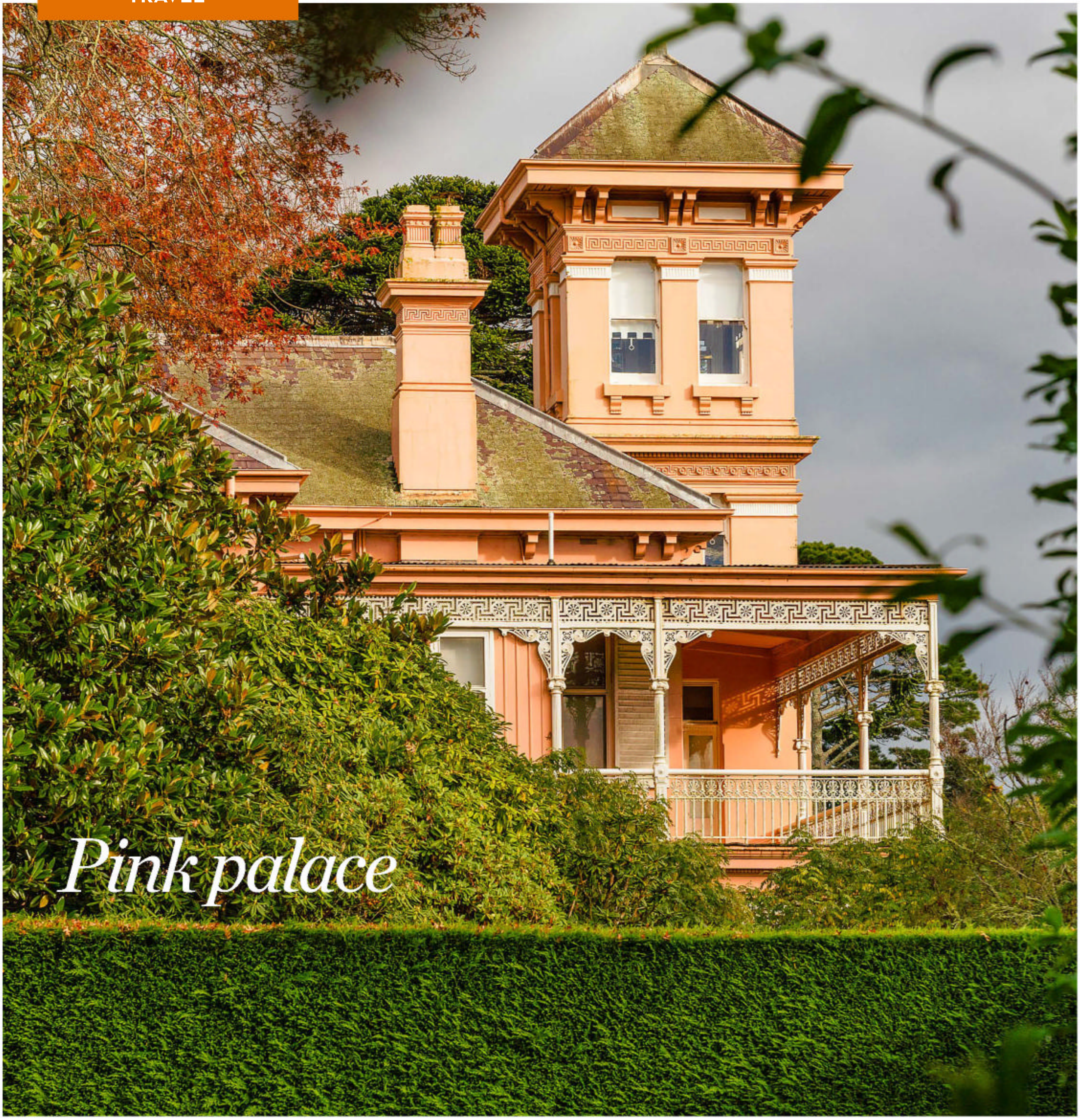
Music to your ears

WHAT Successful merchant James Butchart built magnificent Beleura in 1863 on his 180-acre (72-ha) pastoral run overlooking Schnapper Point, now Mornington, in Victoria. It passed through a succession of owners, including theatrical entrepreneur Sir George Tallis. His son, composer John Tallis, bequeathed the imposing Italianate villa to the state in 1996. Beleura's collection includes historic cars, musical instruments and artworks by Arthur Boyd and ceramicist Klytie Pate.

WHERE Mornington, about an hour's drive south-west of Melbourne.

TRY Check beleura.org.au for regular music concerts in the Tallis Pavilion or visit the *Inspired by Jane Austen* exhibition as part of a booked tour.

SCAN ME
Book tickets to see talented music students perform chamber music on November 6.



Pink palace

Photography National Trust (NSW)

WHAT Ornate Victorian mansion Retford Park in Bowral was built in 1887 and remodelled by media magnate James Fairfax in the 1960s. He developed the garden, adding an aviary, arboretum, fountain walk and sculpture gardens. In 2016, he bequeathed the $18 million property to the National Trust. You can now wander the beautiful gardens or book a guided tour of the peach-hued house to learn about Fairfax's furniture and art collections.

WHERE Bowral, Southern Highlands, New South Wales.

TRY Visit Southern Highlands Regional Gallery Ngununggula next door to Retford Park, in an old dairy building on the property.

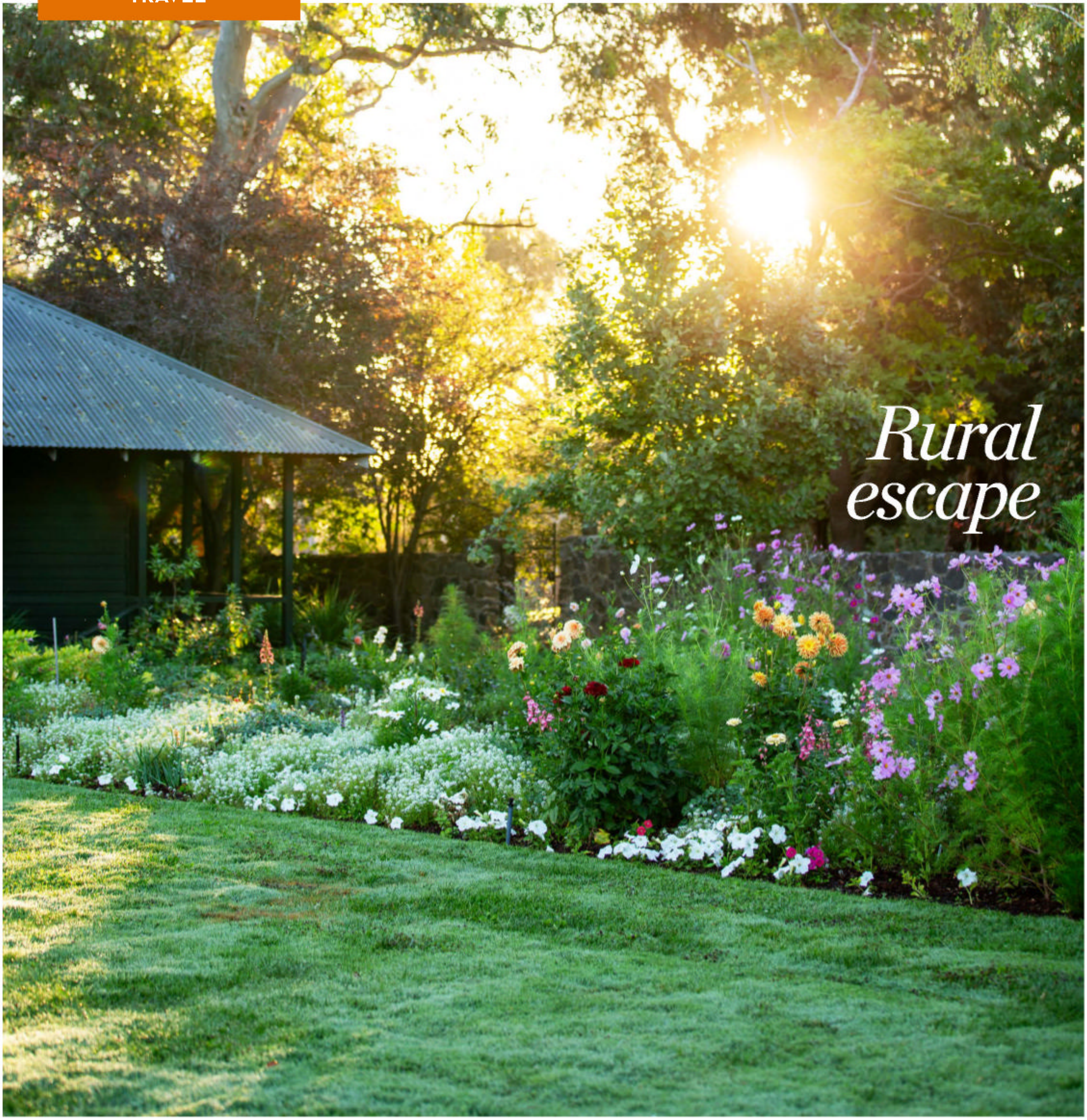
SCAN ME
Stop for coffee or lunch at Hearth by Moonacres cafe next door.

History restored

Photography South Australian Tourism Commission

WHAT Anlaby in the Mount Lofty Ranges was established as a merino sheep farm in 1839 when a flock of 5000 sheep were walked 1200km from Sydney to South Australia. The station had periods of neglect, but since 2004 the current owners have been restoring 28 heritage-listed structures built from stone, wood and steel. The Edwardian-style gardens are a highlight, with a formal rose garden, fountains, ornamental lake, folly and a glasshouse.
WHERE Hamilton, an hour's drive from Adelaide, near Kapunda.
TRY Book a tour of the house and garden, plus a Devonshire tea! If you stay overnight at one of the cottages you'll have time to visit nearby wineries and even fit in some croquet.

SCAN ME
Can't visit? Buy quality wool products from the Anlaby store online.



Rural escape

Photography Emma Jane Industries

WHAT Banongill Station is a working sheep and cropping farm. During the 19th century it was such a big workplace that it had its own school and sports teams. The homestead was originally a stone cottage built in 1853, then had a large red-brick extension added in 1905.

WHERE Skipton in western Victoria, a two-hour drive from Melbourne.

TRY Guests who stay at the 1860s Lemongum cottage perched above Mt Emu Creek can enjoy walks around the 15 acres (6 ha) of heritage gardens. Enjoy the bounty of a country town at the Skipton Market, every second Saturday of the month. You'll find homemade cakes, jams and sauces, as well as locally grown plants. ■

SCAN ME
Stay at the two-bedroom, 1860s Lemongum cottage at Banongill Station through Airbnb.

Ferns and forest bathing

Photography Claire Takacs

WHAT Rippon Lea Estate is a spectacular red-brick mansion built in 1868, now with 14 acres (5 ha) of Victorian gardens. Louisa Jones donated the estate to the National Trust on her death in 1972. Have a picnic by the lake, get gardening inspiration in the conservatory or take a meandering stroll through the largest fernery in the southern hemisphere. There are a range of unexpected events here, from sound healing sessions in the ballroom to forest bathing in the gardens.

WHERE Ripponlea, Melbourne, Vic.

TRY Bringing the kids? Let them do the self-guided discovery trail to meet waddling ducks and see a working windmill, or visit The Trust Makers' Market on select Sundays each month.

SCAN ME
Visit the Gatehouse Nursery to buy plants propagated from Rippon Lea.

Heritage sheep farm

Photography South Australian Tourism Commission

WHAT Bungaree Station in South Australia was established by George Hawker and his brothers in 1841. It grew to become one of Australia's most successful sheep properties, running 100,000 merino sheep. The station operated like a small village, with its own store, school, council chambers, blacksmith shop and church, as well as the homestead and staff cottages. The 7000-acre (28-ha) property is still a working sheep farm and is owned by the same family, generations on.

WHERE In the Clare Valley, a two-hour drive (140km) from Adelaide.

TRY Tour the property or stay at one of the nine accommodation options for a slice of picturesque farm life without having to get your hands dirty.

SCAN ME

Make your trip with a glass of world-class Clare Valley riesling.

Photography Shutterstock

Grand designs

WHAT The expansive Werribee Park includes an enormous 1877 basalt and sandstone mansion built in a Renaissance Revival style. Does it look familiar? It was a filming location for *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries, Winchester* and even *Neighbours*. Then put on your rose-coloured glasses to see up to 5000 roses bloom in the six-acre (2.5-ha) Victoria State Rose Garden, best seen November to April.

WHERE Werribee South, 35km west of Melbourne.

TRY After visiting Werribee Park, head to Werribee Open Range Zoo next door to see lions, rhinos, giraffes and zebras as well as Aussie wildlife. ■

SCAN ME

Book an Australian Wildlife Experience at Werribee Open Range Zoo to get up close to kangaroos and koalas.

BOX OF TRICKS

WITH ADAM

Toolboxes are usually bashed-up, rusting metal boxes – but why not make yourself an upgrade. Inspired by the traditional Japanese wooden toolbox with its integrated handles and a clever sliding lid, this project uses recycled pallet wood to construct a practical storage box.

Project JOHN RAE *Photography* PHILLIP CASTLETON

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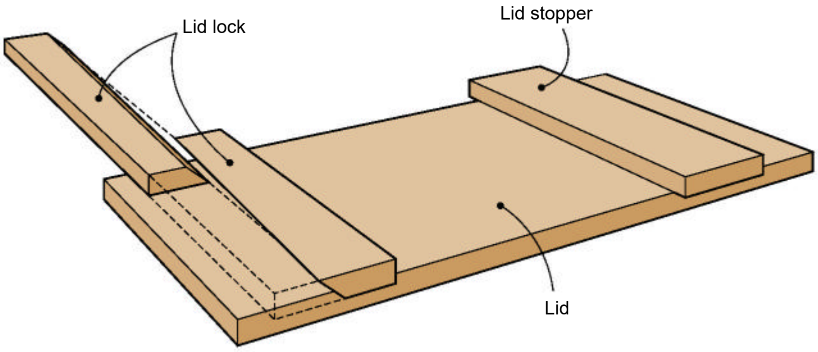
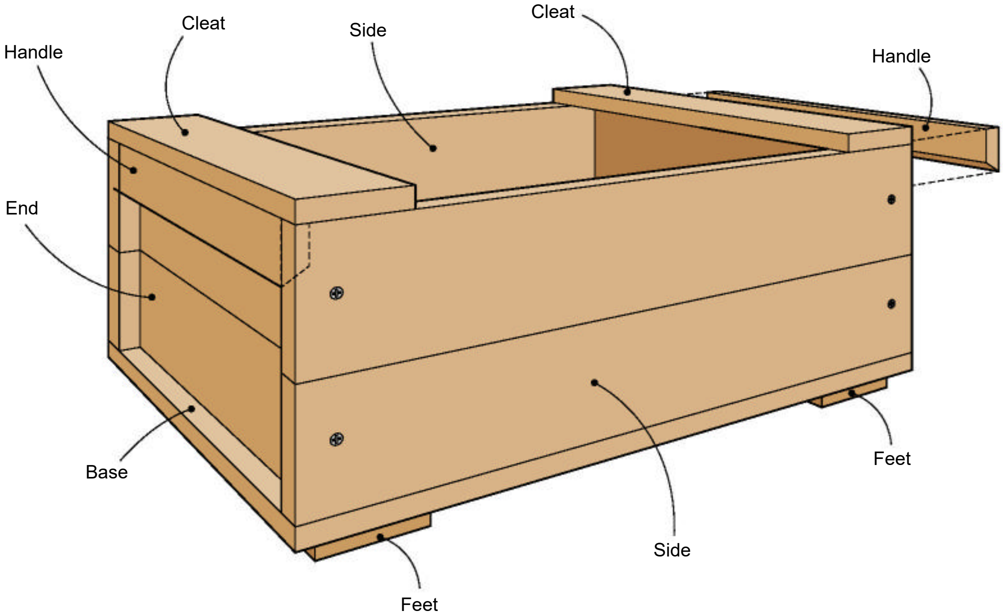
Join me as I show you how to create great spaces on *BHG* TV, Fridays at 7pm on Channel 7. For more DIY tips, go to **BHG.COM.AU**

EASY STEPS TO A JAPANESE TOOLBOX





SCAN ME
Scan this QR code to watch Adam build this project.

Components for toolbox (all measurements in mm)

PART	SIZE	QTY
Ends	306 x 260	2
Sides	700 x 260	2
Base	700 x 350	1
Handle piece	306 x 150	2
Cut in half lengthways with 45° bevelled edges for two 306 x 75 handles.		
Feet	380 x 100	2
Cleats	400 x 100	2
Lid	553 x 305	1
Lid stopper	400 x 100	1

Lid lock: Make two tapered wedges that fit together, cutting a 400 x 100mm piece diagonally with 45° bevelled edges.

Gather your supplies

- Timber pallet (or other 22mm thick wood pieces)
- Wood glue
- 14g x 75mm galvanised hex head bugle screws
- Countersink drill bit
- 40mm nails
- Wax or clear coat to finish

You'll also need

Claw hammer, planer, clamps, circular saw, tape measure, random orbital sander with 40-grit sanding discs, cloth, drill, masking tape.

Safety note

When operating power tools, wear safety glasses, a mask and earmuffs, and tie your hair back.

Here's how

STEP 1 Pull apart the pallet using a claw hammer, removing any fasteners. Plane the edges of the pallet boards straight, ready to glue together.
STEP 2 Position boards edge to edge to make four panels for the ends, sides, base and top (see the list of components, at left). Apply wood glue and clamp flat to dry. Cut pieces to size, setting the circular saw to 45° to bevel handles and lid lock.
STEP 3 Sand panels with 40-grit sandpaper and wipe clean with a cloth. We did a light sand for a rustic look.
STEP 4 Position an end piece against a side piece, inset 22mm from the side's end. Predrill holes with a

countersinking bit, then apply glue and secure with bugle screws into each board. Repeat for other end and side, insetting the end by 22mm. Predrill, glue and screw together to create a box frame.

STEP 5 Position the base over the box frame, flush with the side edges. Predrill, then glue and screw to attach.

STEP 6 At the ends, position the handles flush with the top, long sides of the bevels facing out to create handholds. Apply glue and secure with nails.

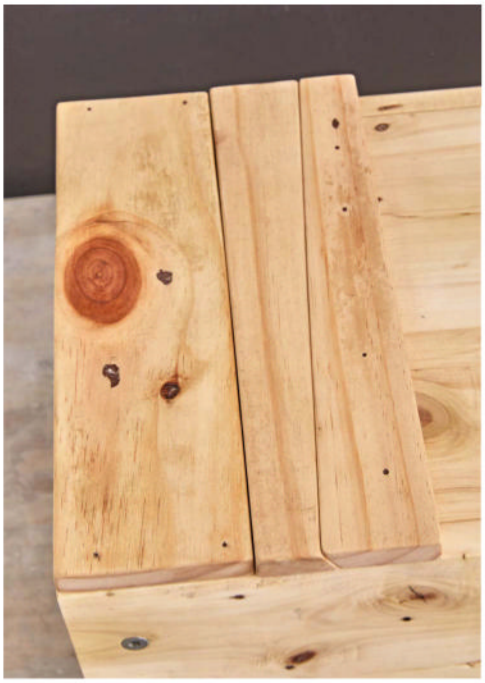
STEP 7 On the top of the box, position a cleat flush at each end, then apply glue and secure with nails.

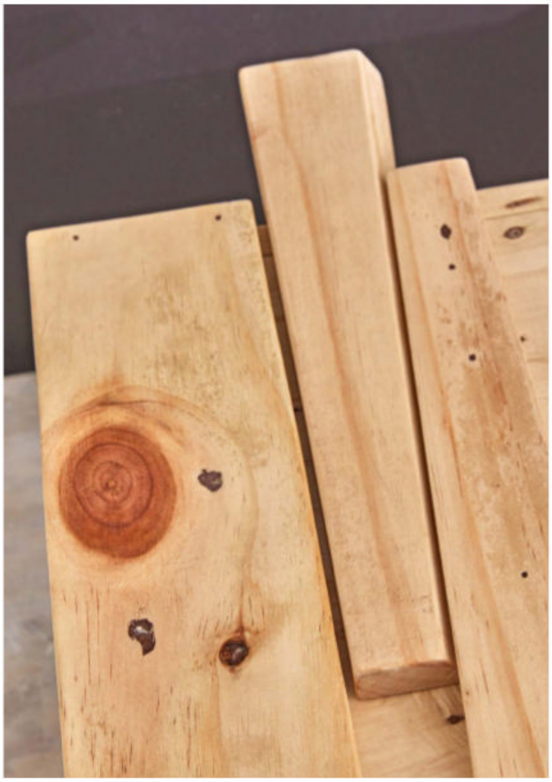
STEP 8 To make the lid lock, slide the lid under a cleat to stop against the end. Use the cleat as a guide to mark a line on the lid. Centre a wedge on the line, long side of the tapered bevel facing outwards, then glue and nail.

STEP 9 Position the lid with the wedge against the cleat, slide in the loose wedge to complete the lock so it pushes the lid under the opposite cleat. (Add a loop of tape to hold the loose end of the lid to prevent it from falling.) Use the cleat as a guide to mark a line, centre the lid stopper against the line, glue and nail.

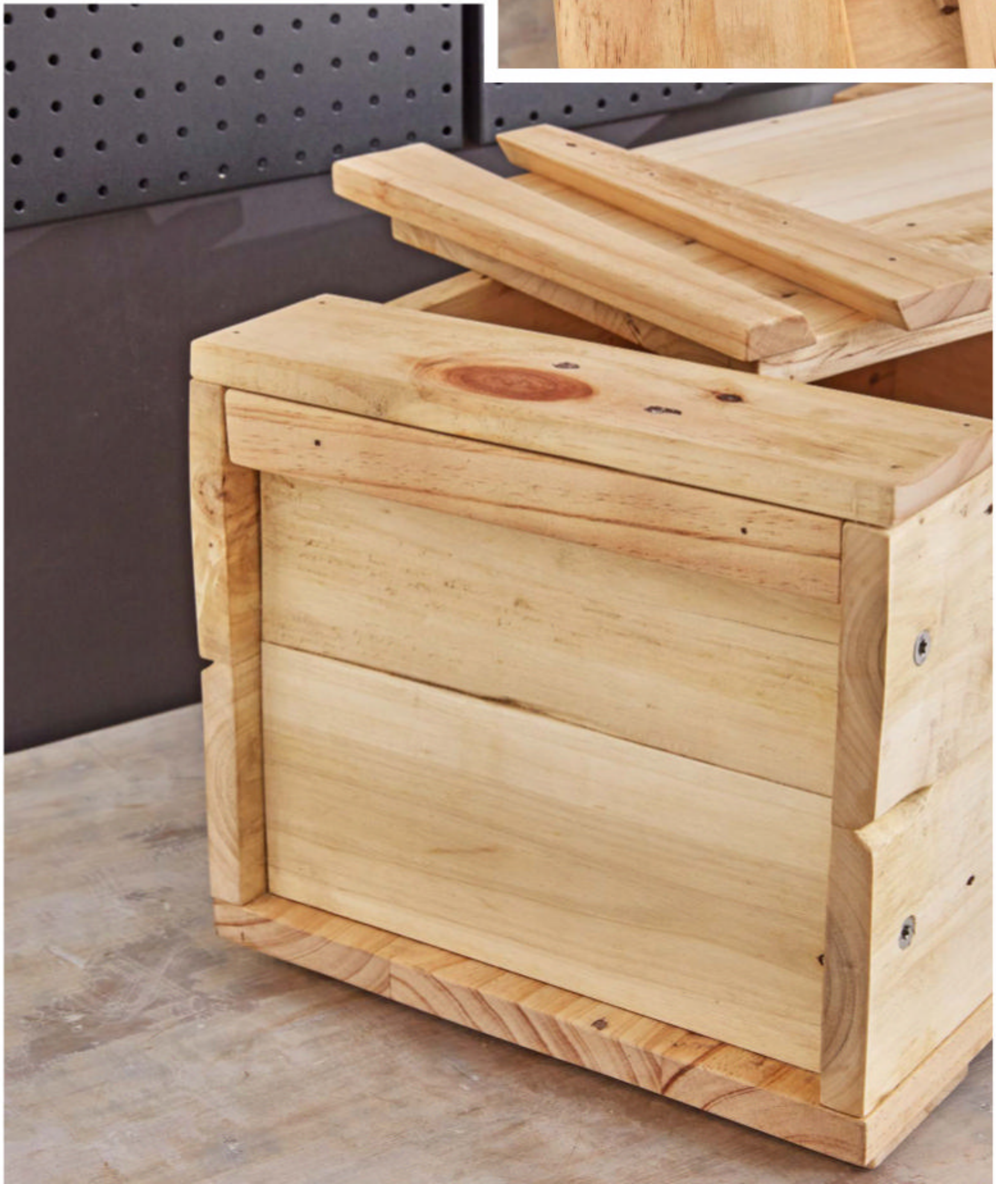
STEP 10 On the toolbox's base, centre the feet, 22mm in from the ends, then apply glue and nail into the sides through the base. Use a wax or clear coat to finish. ■

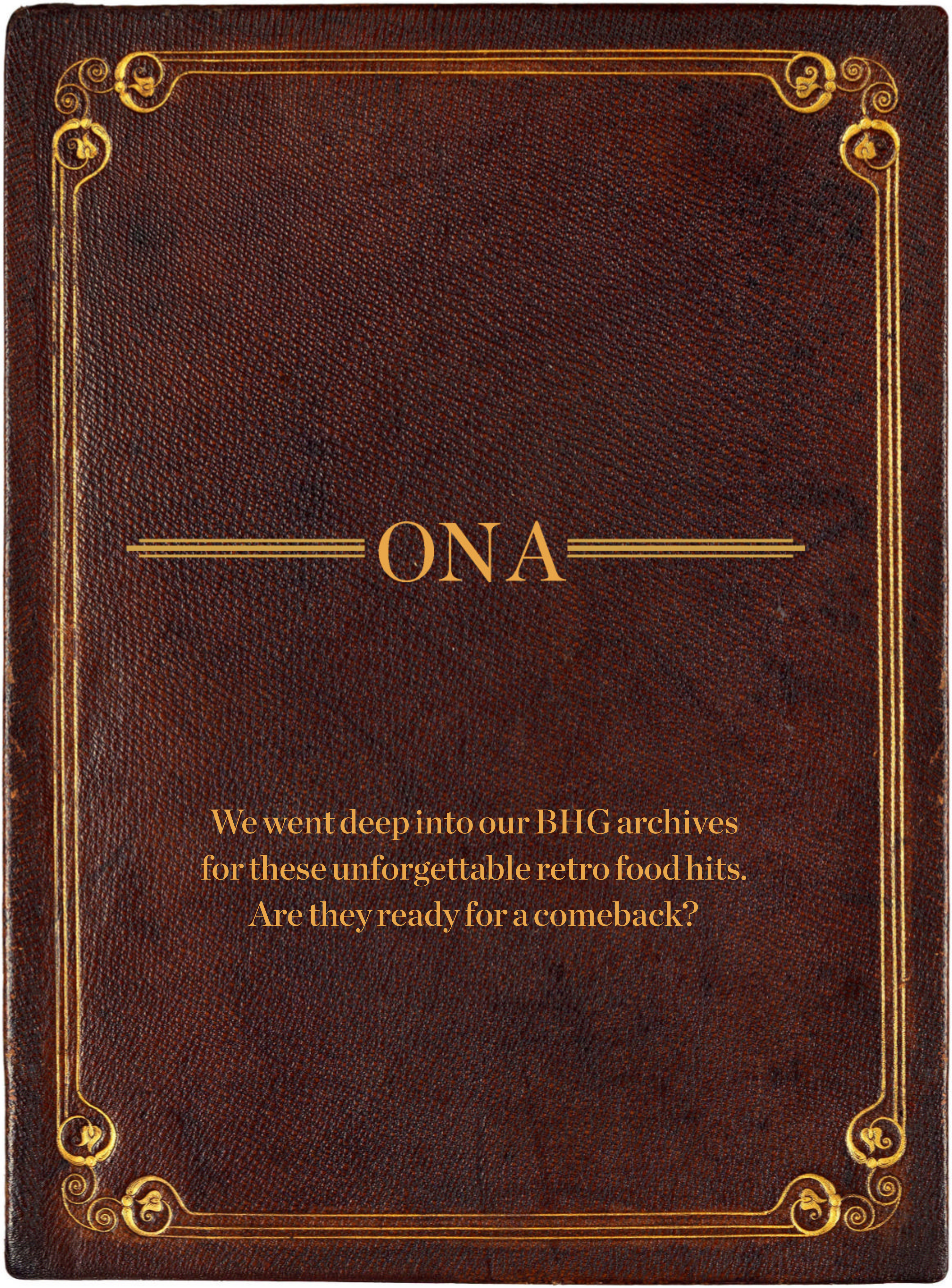
FOR PROJECT SUPPLIES, SEE STOCKISTS ON PAGE 188.





ABOVE, RIGHT AND BELOW The toolbox lid tucks neatly under the cleat and the sliding lid lock holds it in place. Genius!





ONA

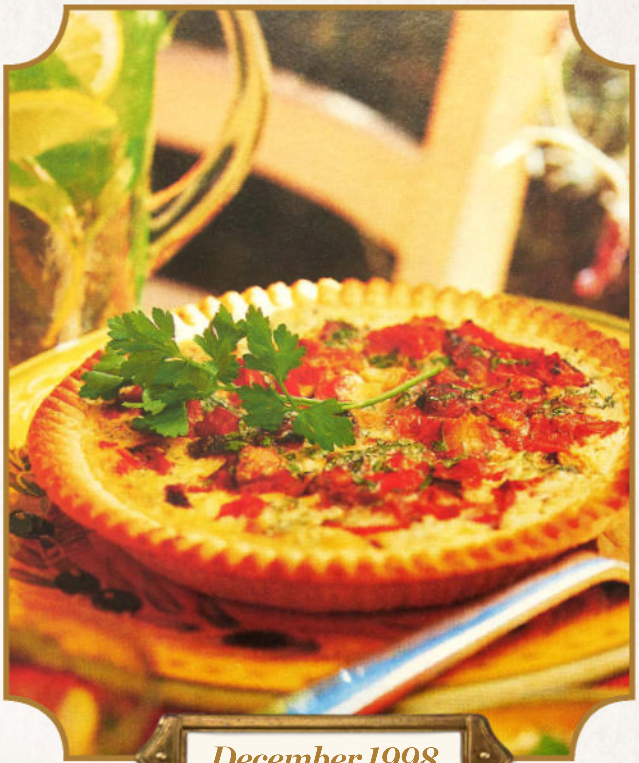
We went deep into our BHG archives for these unforgettable retro food hits. Are they ready for a comeback?

Prawns in tomato cups
Recipe on page 146

December 1978

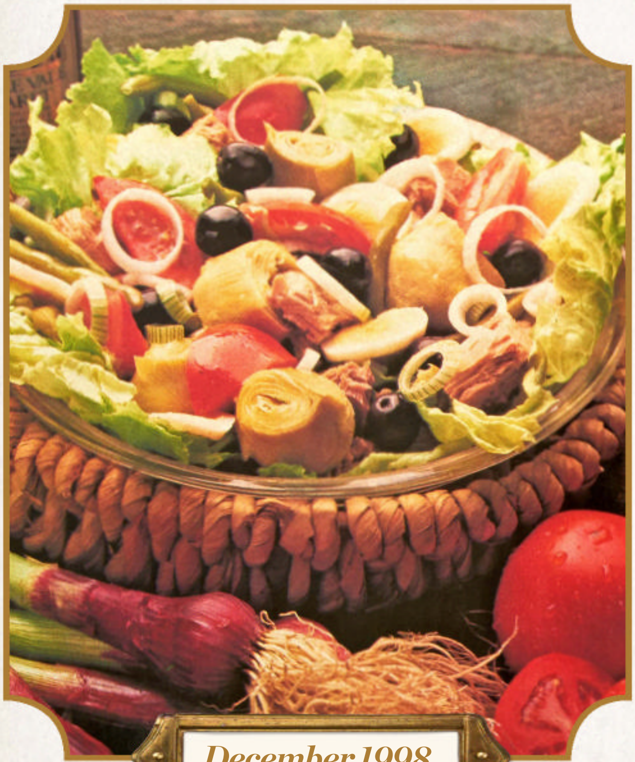
January 1982

Jellied asparagus moulds



December 1998

Ratatouille quiche



December 1998

Salad Niçoise

Christmas 2010

Grilled ham on mini dampers
with pineapple relish

Lime and poppyseed cake

Recipe on page 149

May 2001

PRAWNS IN TOMATO CUPS

December 1978

Preparation time 25 mins
Serves 6

6 large tomatoes
500g cooked prawns
2 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 tablespoon chopped chives

STEP 1 Cut tops from tomatoes. Scoop out pulp and discard.
STEP 2 Peel and devein half the prawns. Finely chop and combine with the mayonnaise. Spoon the mixture into the hollowed tomatoes. Sprinkle with chives.
STEP 3 Peel and devein the remaining prawns, leaving the tails intact. Arrange on top of the filled tomatoes to garnish.

JELLIED ASPARAGUS MOULDS

January 1982

Preparation time 25 mins plus chilling
Serves 6

1 sachet plain gelatine
1½ cups canned vegetable juice or seasoned tomato juice
2 teaspoons chicken stock powder
½ teaspoon dried tarragon
½ cup cold water
1 hard-boiled free-range egg, sliced
8–10 fresh asparagus spears, blanched, cooled, cut into 4cm lengths (or use canned)
1½ cups assorted vegetables (such as shredded cabbage, chopped parsley, cucumber, zucchini, sliced mushrooms or drained canned kidney beans)
2 tablespoons chopped onion
Lettuce leaves, to serve
Red capsicum strips or radish slices (optional), to serve
Green onion fans (optional), to serve

STEP 1 In a saucepan, soften gelatine in ½ cup vegetable juice. Add stock powder and tarragon. Heat gently, stirring, until gelatine dissolves. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining juice and cold water.
STEP 2 Refrigerate about ½ cup of mixture until it's the consistency of unbeaten egg whites. Spoon into bottoms of six ½-cup fluted moulds.
STEP 3 Put one egg slice in each mould. Stand asparagus spears upright around edges. Cover and refrigerate until almost set.
STEP 4 Refrigerate remaining gelatine mixture until partially set. Fold in vegetables and onion. Spoon over egg layer in moulds. Cover and refrigerate until firm.
STEP 5 To serve, unmould onto lettuce leaves. Garnish with capsicum or radishes and decorate with green onion fans, if desired.

RATATOUILLE QUICHE

December 1998

Preparation time 30 mins
Cooking time 40 mins
Serves 4–6

2 tablespoons olive oil
½ medium brown onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
1 sprig thyme
1 green or red capsicum, diced
1 medium zucchini, diced
1 small eggplant, diced
3 tomatoes, diced
Sea-salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to season
1 unbaked 22cm-diameter shortcrust pastry case (flan base)
100ml thickened cream
2 free-range eggs
2 tablespoons chopped parsley

STEP 1 Heat oil in a saucepan on high heat. Add onion, garlic, thyme and capsicum and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes.
STEP 2 Add zucchini and eggplant. Cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Add tomatoes. Season. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Transfer mixture to a bowl.
STEP 3 Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan-forced. Place pastry case on a baking tray. Bake until lightly browned.
STEP 4 In a bowl, whisk cream, eggs and parsley. Season.
STEP 5 Spoon ratatouille mixture evenly into pastry case. Pour cream mixture over top. Bake for 20 minutes or until filling is set. Serve hot or cold.

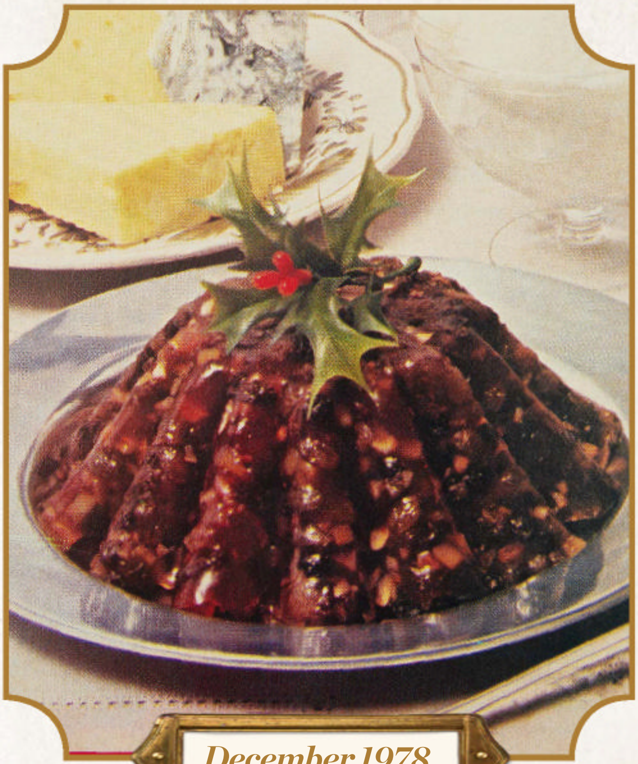
SALAD NIÇOISE

December 1998

Preparation time 20 mins plus chilling
Serves 4

Lettuce leaves, to serve
220g can chunky-style tuna, drained
1 can green beans, drained
1 can artichoke hearts, drained
2 tomatoes, quartered
2 hard-boiled free-range eggs, sliced
10 black olives
French dressing, to serve

STEP 1 Arrange lettuce leaves in a large salad bowl. Top with tuna, beans, artichoke hearts, tomatoes and egg.
STEP 2 Decorate with olives. Cover and refrigerate until serving. Drizzle with dressing just before serving.



December 1978

Christmas pudding

April 1987

Cherry apple pie

Christmas 2000

Chilled cherry 'n' chocolate pudding

November 2009

Latte jelly

GRILLED HAM ON MINI DAMPERS WITH PINEAPPLE RELISH

Christmas 2010

Preparation time 50 mins plus overnight standing
Cooking time 1 hour 10 mins
Makes 30

2 tablespoons maple syrup
800g piece leftover boneless ham

PINEAPPLE RELISH
¼ teaspoon yellow mustard seeds
2 teaspoons juniper berries, lightly crushed
1 small pineapple, peeled, cored, chopped
¾ cup caster sugar
¼ cup water
½ cup white wine vinegar

DAMPER
3 cups self-raising flour
Pinch sea-salt flakes
60g butter, chopped
1½ cups milk
Extra flour, for kneading

STEP 1 To make the relish, place mustard seeds and juniper berries in a medium saucepan on low heat. Cook for 2 minutes or until the seeds begin to crackle. Add pineapple, sugar, water and vinegar. Stir until sugar dissolves. Increase heat to medium. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 30–35 minutes or until pineapple is soft and mixture resembles jam. Spoon into a hot sterilised jar. Let stand overnight.
STEP 2 To make damper, preheat oven to 210°C/190°C fan-forced. Line two trays with baking paper. Sift flour and salt into a bowl. Rub in butter until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Make a well and pour in milk. Stir until a soft dough forms.
STEP 3 Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead gently until smooth. Cut off pieces the size of a heaped tablespoon. Roll into balls. Snip a cross in tops with scissors. Place on trays. Bake 15–20 minutes or until golden and hollow-sounding when tapped. Set aside to cool.
STEP 4 Heat barbecue on medium heat. Drizzle maple syrup over ham to coat. Cook for 5 minutes each side or until caramelised. Set aside for 5 minutes to rest. Thinly slice.
STEP 5 Split dampers in half. Fill with ham and 1 teaspoon relish. Replace tops and serve.

CHRISTMAS PUDDING

December 1978

Preparation time 30 mins plus chilling
Serves 8

110g sultanas
28g currants
110g raisins
55g prunes, pitted
1¼ cups water
110g glacé cherries, chopped
55g mixed peel, chopped
140ml sherry
1 tablespoon brandy
4 tablespoons caster sugar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Strip of lemon zest
3 rounded teaspoons gelatine
28g almonds, chopped
2 cups whipped cream, flavoured with brandy to taste, to serve

STEP 1 Put sultanas, currants, raisins and prunes in a bowl. Cover with ½ cup hot water and set aside for 15 minutes to soak. Drain, reserving liquid. Chop prunes. In a large bowl, mix together the soaked fruit and prunes, cherries and peel. Stir in sherry and brandy.
STEP 2 In a saucepan, combine sugar, reserved liquid, lemon juice and zest. Bring slowly to a boil over medium heat. Strain through a fine sieve into a bowl. Stir in gelatine until dissolved. Add enough water to make 280ml liquid.
STEP 3 Pour gelatine mixture over the fruit mixture and add almonds. Mix well to distribute gelatine evenly. Transfer to a mould. Refrigerate until set.
STEP 4 Turn pudding onto a serving plate. Serve with whipped cream flavoured with brandy.

CHERRY APPLE PIE

April 1987

Preparation time 40 mins
Cooking time 1 hour
Serves 8–10

250g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
185g butter or lard, chilled, chopped
6–7 tablespoons cold water
450g can pitted tart red cherries
250g caster sugar, plus 2 teaspoons extra
3 tablespoons arrowroot
1kg cooking apples, peeled, cored, thinly sliced
30g butter
Milk, for brushing
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
Double cream or ice cream, to serve

STEP 1 Put flour in a bowl. Using fingertips, rub in butter or lard until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Gradually add just enough cold water for dough to come together. Divide dough in half and shape into two balls. Cover with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until needed.
STEP 2 In a bowl, combine cherries and their juice, sugar and arrowroot. Add apples and toss lightly to coat. Set aside for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan-forced.
STEP 3 On a lightly floured surface, roll out one ball to a 32.5cm disc. Ease into a 20cm x 3.5cm round pie dish without stretching. Trim pastry to 1cm beyond rim. Spoon filling into pastry shell and dot with butter
STEP 4 Roll out remaining pastry on a lightly floured surface to a 25cm disc. Cut slits or shapes for steam vents. Put

over filling, then fold edges under, seal and flute. Use a fork to make criss-cross impressions between flutes. Brush with milk. Combine cinnamon and extra caster sugar and sprinkle over pastry. Cover edge with foil.

STEP 5 Bake for about 1 hour or until golden, removing foil halfway through baking. Serve warm with cream or ice cream.

CHILLED CHERRY 'N' CHOCOLATE PUDDING

Christmas 2000

Preparation time 35 mins plus overnight chilling
Serves 6–8

2 chocolate or plain sponge cakes (see Cook's Tip)
¼ cup marsala, plus 2 tablespoons extra
750g ricotta cheese
¼ cup thickened cream
½ cup icing sugar mixture, sifted, plus extra to serve
200g dark chocolate, grated
680g canned pitted black cherries, well drained

STEP 1 Line a 10-cup pudding basin with plastic wrap. Cut each cake in half horizontally, then into wedges. Line base and sides of basin with cake pieces, pressing them together to fit.

STEP 2 Brush the cake generously with marsala. In a food processor, blend the ricotta, cream, icing sugar and extra marsala until smooth. Transfer to a bowl. Fold in chocolate and cherries.

STEP 3 Spoon ricotta mixture into cake-lined basin, pressing firmly. Cover with remaining cake pieces, then cover with plastic wrap. Put a saucer on top, weight with a can and refrigerate overnight.

STEP 4 To serve, invert pudding onto a serving plate and dust with extra icing sugar.

COOK'S TIP

This recipe originally used store-bought chocolate sponge cakes that unfortunately aren't available any more. We think plain sponge would be delicious, or you could try a store-bought sponge roll, cut into 5mm-thick slices and arranged in the pan instead.

LIME AND POPPYSEED CAKE

May 2001

Preparation time 25 mins
Cooking time 40 mins
Serves 8

100g butter, softened
Finely grated zest of ½ lime
2 tablespoons honey
½ cup caster sugar, plus 2 tablespoons extra
1 free-range egg yolk
¾ cup milk
150g plain flour, sifted
1 teaspoon baking powder
Pinch sea-salt flakes
3½ tablespoons poppy seeds, plus 2 teaspoons extra
2 free-range egg whites
Zest of ½ lime, cut into fine strips, to garnish

LIME ICING

1 cup pure icing sugar, sifted
Juice of 1 lime

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 160°C/140°C fan-forced. Grease and line a 15cm cake pan with baking paper. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to beat butter, lime zest, honey and sugar until creamy. Beat in egg yolk and milk (the mixture may look curdled).

STEP 2 Stir in sifted flour, baking powder, salt and poppy seeds.

STEP 3 In another bowl using a clean electric mixer, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Add extra caster sugar and beat again until glossy. Fold gently into cake mixture.

STEP 4 Spoon mixture into prepared pan. Bake for 40 minutes or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Cool in pan for 5 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to cool.

STEP 5 For the icing, mix icing sugar and lime juice until smooth. When cake is cold, spread over icing. Sprinkle with extra poppy seeds and decorate with lime zest strips.

LATTE JELLY

November 2009

Preparation time 15 mins plus 3–4 hours chilling
Cooking time 5 mins
Serves 4

1 tablespoon gelatine
½ cup boiling water
1 tablespoon instant coffee granules
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
⅓ cup caster sugar
375ml can evaporated milk
1 teaspoon vanilla essence

STEP 1 In a heatproof bowl, sprinkle gelatine over boiling water and stir until dissolved.

STEP 2 In a medium saucepan, combine coffee, cocoa, sugar and evaporated milk. Stir on low until coffee dissolves and mixture is hot (don't boil). Remove from heat and set aside until lukewarm.

STEP 3 Stir gelatine mixture and vanilla into coffee mixture. Pour into a 4-cup mould or dish. Refrigerate for 3–4 hours or until firm.

STEP 4 To serve, dip mould base briefly in hot water and invert jelly onto a serving plate. Serve immediately. ■

SCAN ME
Tell us about your favourite retro recipe! Scan the QR code to join the conversation on Facebook.

Photography Rodney Weidland, John Hay, Chris L. Jones

FAMILY favourites

Like all the senses, taste has a way of transporting us back in time. One bite of a nostalgic family recipe and you're remembering meaningful moments with loved ones. Here, the BHG team share their much-loved family recipes for the festive season.

Photography JOHN PAUL URIZAR *Styling* MICHELE CRANSTON *Food preparation* TAMIKA O'NEILL

In the lead-up to Christmas, my grandmother's oven runs pretty much non-stop. Friends and neighbours drop in to request her traditional fruitcakes, puddings and other festive treats, but I'm lucky to be on her list of family members who receive a cake each year. I love how rich it is, and that it just gets better the longer you let the flavours develop.

This year, I'm attempting to make one myself. There's joy in my grandmother's voice as she shares her boiled fruitcake recipe with me over the phone. She pauses after each step to explain the importance of the specific instructions. I hope you'll cook it with me – may it remind you to master your own family recipes, to be shared and enjoyed for generations.

Tahni Mesann, digital editor

RETA'S BOILED FRUITCAKE

Preparation time 40 mins plus overnight cooling
Cooking time 3½ hours
Serves 12

750g mixed dried fruit
1⅔ cups finely chopped dates
100g glacé cherries, chopped
125g unsalted butter, chopped
¾ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon mixed spice
½ cup water
2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
2 tablespoons marmalade jam
½ cup sweet sherry, plus extra for brushing
1 cup self-raising flour, sifted
1 cup plain flour, sifted
½ teaspoon salt

STEP 1 Combine dried fruit, dates, cherries, butter, sugar, mixed spice and water in a medium saucepan. Stir over medium heat until the butter melts and the sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil, then cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Transfer fruit mixture to a large heatproof bowl. Set aside, covered, until cold (don't refrigerate).

STEP 2 Preheat oven to 140°C/120°C fan-forced. Line the base and sides of a deep 20cm square cake pan with three layers of baking paper, extending the paper 5cm above the side.

STEP 3 Add the eggs, marmalade, sherry, sifted flours and salt to the cold fruit mixture. Mix thoroughly until well combined. Spoon the cake mixture into the pan and level the surface. Bang the pan on the bench a couple of times to burst any large air pockets in the mixture.

STEP 4 Bake for 3 hours or until a skewer inserted in the centre of the cake comes out clean. Brush the hot cake with extra sherry. Cover with foil and a clean tea towel and cool in the pan overnight.

SHERRY TRIFLE

It was a real occasion to have Christmas with our relatives (we lived at opposite ends of the state). If it meant having Aunty Fay's trifle, I was even more excited! It had layers of store-bought sponge roll, tinned apricots, red and green jelly, homemade custard, whipped cream and nuts on top. And rather big lashings of sherry (always good for prompting an afternoon nap). The hardest part was seeing it in the fridge and not being able to touch it until Christmas lunch.

Jo McKinnon, chief sub-editor

SUMMER PUDDING

Every year without fail my family makes a summer pudding with a trusty Stephanie Alexander recipe. Making this has now become a tradition I continue as an adult. I think the secret is in fresh berries – redcurrants are a must, and strawberries are a no as they're too overpowering. The result is tart, sweet, and turns humble white bread into a masterpiece. You'd be forgiven for licking your plate. **Megan Osborne, editor**

ROCKY ROAD

Rocky road has been on repeat at Christmas ever since I can remember. The original recipe was from *The Australian Women's Weekly* back in 1976. We still make the same recipe, and my mum's top tip is to keep an eye out for supermarket specials in the month before Christmas and buy the nuts, chocolate and marshmallows when they're half-price.

Sarah Murphy, senior food editor

EGGPLANT PARMIGIANA

No matter the special occasion, eggplant parmigiana will be on the table for our family. From Christmas to Easter to a milestone birthday, my Nonna will make sure everyone is well-fed. Layers of eggplant, homemade passata and breadcrumbs make for a simple yet satisfying dish. To me, it's not just a side, but the main event.

Rachel Iorfino, senior content producer

HANDMADE PASTA

Christmas lunch and dinner has always been held at my Nonni's homes and, since I married, the tradition has grown richer. I now celebrate with three incredible feasts. Every year, without fail, Nonna Marisa, Nonna Angela and Nonna Rosa handmake pasta, whether it's lasagna, ravioli, fettucine or pillowy gnocchi. While the pasta changes, the sugo (sauce) always remains the same.

Jade Coull, senior content producer

FILIPINO MANGO FLOAT

A Filipino classic, a mango float has always been one of those recipes you just know – a four-ingredient masterpiece that requires little skill or prep. My sister makes layers of mango, crunchy biscuit and sweet condensed milk with Mum's careful guidance. As the younger sister, I always used to be sous chef, left to lick spoons clean and sneak a bit of biscuit.

Jada Susas, editorial & production assistant

CHINESE POPIAH

For special occasions a recipe I love is popiah, a fresh spring roll dish from the Fujian Province in China, where my mum was born. Mum uses the same wheat-flour pastry wrappers as the fried ones and you can find these in major supermarkets. In true Mama Tang style, she doesn't use a recipe. The filling can be anything you like but typical ingredients would be cooked julienned cabbage, shiitake mushrooms, pressed bean curd, pork, chives and bean sprouts. We all get involved in making them while we sit and eat the other 10 or so dishes my mum has expertly whipped up.

Carol Tang, senior graphic designer

LEMON MERINGUE PIE

From a young age, eating Christmas pudding in the summer heat never appealed to me. So, each year my lovely Nan would make her mum's delicious lemon meringue pie just for me. No matter what else was on the menu that year, it was somehow MY sweet, tangy lemon meringue pie that ended up at the centre of the table – and, in a family of serious dessert lovers, always sparked a lively debate over who deserved the biggest piece!

Scott Cassidy, creative director

HOT-BOX STEAMED HAM

The centrepiece of our Christmas lunch was a huge shoulder of ham that had been steamed by our grandfather the day before in the hot box. Not your standard hot box, but a thermal steam box that was a familiar sight in the area where we grew up – the thermal wonderland of Rotorua in New Zealand. Not far from us was the Whakarewarewa pā where the famous Pōhutu Geyser blew amid the eerie geothermal landscape. It was there Grandad watched and learnt how the local Maori cooked their food – either by dangling meat and vegetables into the lake or sitting them over the steam vents. So how did our Christmas ham taste? Sweet and delicious! **Jenny Dillon, garden editor** ■

better cooking

[SARAH MURPHY SHARES FOODIE NEWS, PRODUCTS AND TRENDS.]

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CRACK A WHIP

Historic A.G. Oatley Family Wines crafted its modern Whipbird range with top winemaker Larry Cherubino. These easy-drinking wines include this 2024 Margaret River sauvignon blanc, from $22.

SMASH HIT

Perfect for poolside drinks, picnics or dinner parties, the STYLD. range of unbreakable silicone drinkware is a pretty and practical choice for everyday entertaining. With bold shapes and fresh colours, each piece is built to last and looks great, too! From $37 for a set of two.

CRUNCH TIME

Here's how to skip the gluten but not the crunch! Food for Health gluten-free granola comes in four delicious flavours including Caramelised Apple Crumble and Honey Roasted Nuts. Buy it at Coles or Woolworths.

Food for Health
GLUTEN FREE GRANOLA
CARAMELISED APPLE CRUMBLE

FRESHEN UP

How fresh is your fridge? Designed for busy households, the Westinghouse 496L French Door Fridge in silver includes an integrated honeycomb deodoriser filter to absorb strong odours; $1799, from Harvey Norman.

Grab a slice

Chuck out that takeaway menu and cook pizza at home in just two minutes (well, after a preheat)! This clever electric oven delivers even heat and precise control. Cozze Premium Rotate 13" electric pizza oven, $799. ■

Prices are approximate and a guide only.

ALL I WANT FOR
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SNEAK PEEK!

A recipe from *BHG's* *Christmas special...*

Made just for yule! Enjoy a tiny taste of our *All I Want for Christmas* annual, with more than 223 recipes, craft and gifting projects to try.

PECAN COCONUT CRACK

Preparation time 20 mins plus 30 mins cooling and 2 hours chilling
Cooking time 15 mins
Makes 24 pieces

6 Arnott's Salada biscuits
125g butter, chopped
⅓ cup firmly packed brown sugar
¼ teaspoon sea-salt flakes, crushed
2 x 200g packets milk choc bits
½ cup pecans, toasted, chopped
¼ cup toasted shredded coconut

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Grease a 20cm x 30cm (base measurement) lamington pan. Line base and sides with baking paper, extending paper over edges. Cover the base with biscuits, breaking to fit or slightly overlapping as needed.
STEP 2 Put butter and sugar in a medium saucepan on medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 minutes or until butter melts. Simmer, without stirring, for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in salt.
STEP 3 Carefully drizzle the hot caramel mixture over biscuits. Smooth with a spatula. Bake for 5–10 minutes or until caramel is bubbling and deeper golden. The caramel mixture will fill spaces between the biscuits during baking. Carefully transfer pan to a wire rack to cool. Turn oven off.
STEP 4 Sprinkle choc bits evenly over the caramel. Return to turned-off oven for 3 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. Stand for 5 minutes or until chocolate melts completely. Using a spatula, spread the chocolate evenly over the biscuits.
STEP 5 Sprinkle with combined pecans and coconut. Set aside for 30 minutes to cool. Refrigerate for 1–2 hours or until firm.
STEP 6 Using the baking paper, lift the crack onto a board. Break into irregular pieces. Store at room temperature for up to 3 days. ■

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Cool, calm *and* collected

These stylish finds and smart appliances make summer entertaining so easy.

Words SOPHIE AL-BASSAM

1 Iced latte, drip coffee or refreshing rapid cold brew, here you come, with the **Ninja Luxe Cafe Premier Espresso Machine, $999.99**. It has 15 drink presets so you don't need to be a barista to get a great cup.

2 Decorate your table with the **Havana lantern, from $39.95, from Pillow Talk,** made from hemp and bamboo.

3 The **Hisense 483L PureFlat Slim French Door Fridge in white, $1699, from Harvey Norman** is an entertainer's dream. With an XXL door balcony and a big box compartment, you'll be able to store that Christmas ham and keep all the drinks cold.

4 Dining outside? Protect your food with the **Wheel & Barrow mesh food cover in rattan, $99.95**.

5 The **Optimum Thermocook Pro M 3.0, $1400,** is a finalist in the BHG Appliance Awards because it's a multipurpose marvel at a seriously competitive price. Entertainers can use its many functions, including chopping and steaming, to make cooking a breeze, with the help of a free recipe library.

6 The **Husqvarna Automower 310E NERA, $4347 wire free** is another finalist in our Appliance Awards thanks to its smart tech. You can use this robot marvel to mow the lawn before guests arrive, without working up a sweat!

7 Make your patio feel cosier with the **Akita white indoor outdoor rug, from $199, from Fab Habitat.** To clean, just hose it down and line dry.

8 Bring the chill tunes with the **Bose SoundLink Plus portable speaker, $429.95**. It has 20 hours of playback and is water and dust proof.

9 Made for long, lazy days outside, relax on the **Ceti Outdoor Sunbrella Double Sunlounge, $1999, from Harvey Norman.** It has a durable powder-coated aluminium frame and water-resistant upholstery.

10 Dine outside even on the sunniest days with the **Toronto 4-metre rectangular cantilever outdoor umbrella, $1999, from Harvey Norman**. It's easy to adjust to exactly the angle you need and it throws a lot of shade! ■

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Patti Chimkire runs Mali Bakes, a cake studio in Melbourne whose creations are inspired by vintage cake decorating books from the 1970s. Her *Mali Bakes* book (Smith Street Books, $59.99) showcases her signature retro decorating style and reveals the secrets to making some of her unique cake creations, including Retro Love (opposite).

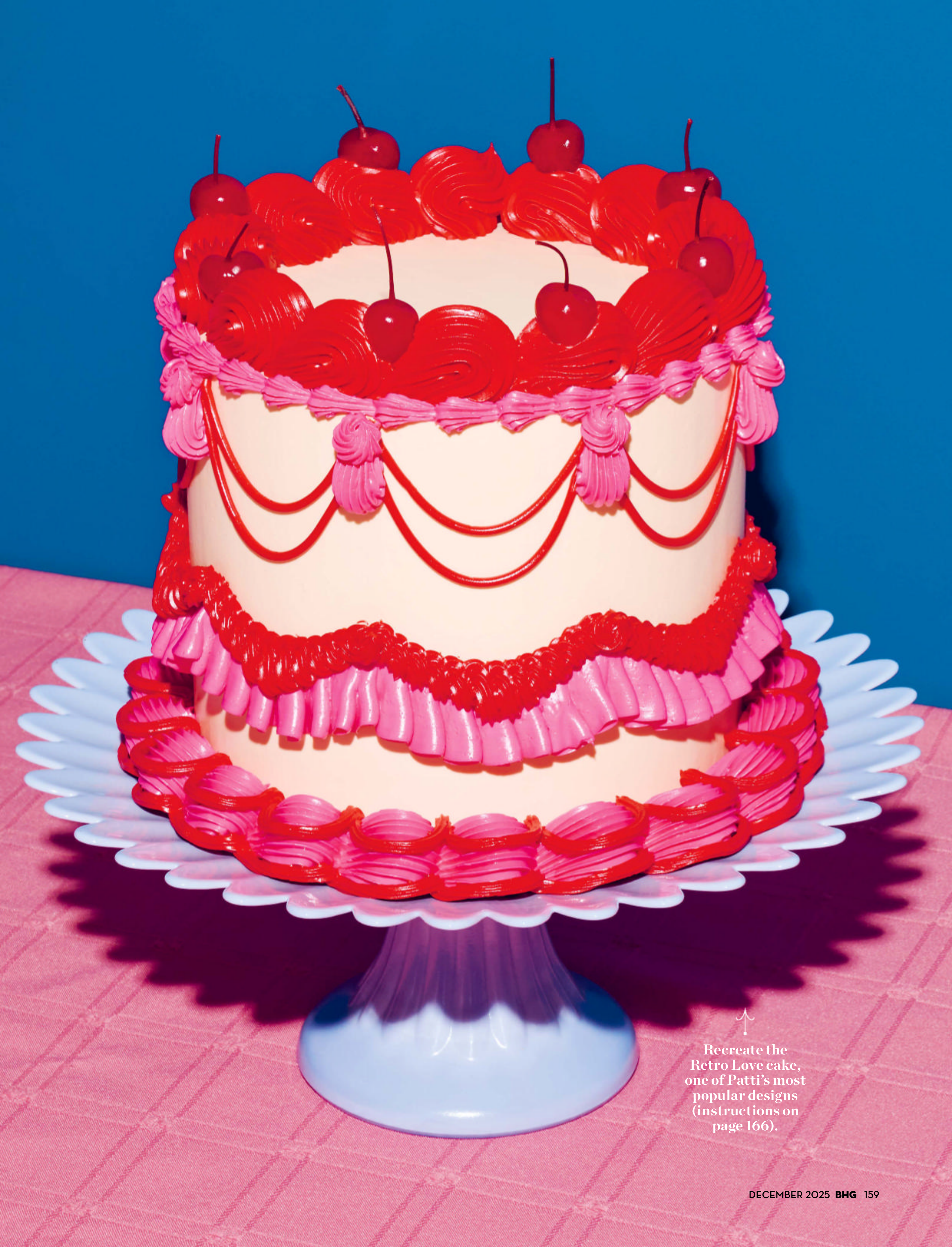
It's one of the most beloved designs at Mali Bakes, says Patti. "It has all the flair you could want: the shells, the ruffles, and those elegant strings! When I think of retro-style cakes, this is exactly what comes to mind."

And don't be scared of the piping! Patti assures us it's a great skill to learn and practise. "This project is the perfect opportunity to master the drop string technique. Admittedly, it's the skill that took me the longest to feel comfortable with, but once you've perfected it, you'll find it's an absolute game changer."

Retro revival

Roll up your sleeves with a creative kitchen project from Patti Chimkire's new book *Mali Bakes*.

Project & recipes Patti Chimkire Photography Daniel Herrmann-Zoll



Recreate the Retro Love cake, one of Patti's most popular designs (instructions on page 166).

SOUR CREAM CHOCOLATE CAKE

290g plain flour
50g cornflour
95g Dutch-processed cocoa powder
12g bicarbonate soda
1½ teaspoons fine sea salt
230g vegetable oil
480g caster sugar
320g full-fat sour cream
150g free-range eggs (about 3 eggs)
270g water
2 teaspoons instant coffee granules

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 150°C. Position an oven rack in centre of oven. If all four cake pans won't fit on one rack, arrange two racks near centre of oven, ensuring there are at least two levels of space between them. Thoroughly spray four 18cm round cake pans with cooking oil and line bases with baking paper, leaving sides unlined.

STEP 2 Sift flour, cornflour, cocoa powder, bicarbonate soda and salt into a bowl. Set aside.

STEP 3 In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, combine oil, sugar, sour cream and eggs. Mix on medium-high speed for 30 seconds, scrape down side of bowl, then mix for another 30 seconds until well combined.

STEP 4 Gradually add the dry ingredients to the wet mixture in three additions. Mix on medium-low speed for 5 seconds after each addition, until just combined, then scrape down side of bowl, ensuring no visible lumps of dry flour remain.

STEP 5 Combine water and instant coffee in a small saucepan and bring to the boil. With mixer on medium-low speed, slowly pour boiling coffee into batter. Once combined, scrape down side of bowl, ensuring batter is evenly mixed.

STEP 6 Divide batter evenly between cake pans, or measure 470g per pan. Pop cakes in oven, either across one or two racks as necessary.

STEP 7 Bake for 40–45 minutes or until a cake tester inserted into centre comes out clean or cakes spring back when gently pressed in middle. Rotate pans front to back after 25 minutes to ensure even baking.

STEP 8 While cakes are baking, lightly spray at least two cooling racks with oil to prevent sticking. (Make sure there's enough room for all cakes to fit comfortably.)

STEP 9 Once cakes are baked, remove from oven and place pans on cooling racks for 15 minutes to cool slightly. Use a straight palette knife to loosen the edge of each cake around the inside of the pans, then gently flip each cake onto the cooling racks and peel off baking paper. Let cakes cool completely for at least 2 hours before assembling cake (see opposite), or wrapping them with plastic wrap.

ROASTED RASPBERRIES

750g raspberries, fresh or frozen
225g caster sugar
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon myrtle (see Cook's Tip)
50g lemon juice

STEP 1 Preheat oven to 180°C. If using fresh raspberries, rinse thoroughly under cold water and gently pat dry with a clean tea towel. In a roasting tray, gently toss raspberries with sugar, cinnamon myrtle and lemon juice until well coated. Cover tray with baking paper, then seal with foil. Roast for about 20 minutes if using fresh raspberries, or 35 minutes if using frozen, stirring halfway through. Once cooked, raspberries should be tender but still hold their shape.

STEP 2 Remove from oven and discard baking paper and foil. Allow to cool completely on tray for about 2 hours. Carefully transfer raspberries and their juices to a bowl or container. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use as a filling when assembling cake (see opposite).

CINNAMON MYRTLE SOAK

100g caster sugar
100g water
1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon myrtle (see Cook's Tip)

STEP 1 Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan and bring to boil on medium-high heat.

STEP 2 Remove from heat and cool completely for 2 hours, then refrigerate until required.

TOASTED WHITE CHOCOLATE CREAM CHEESE BUTTERCREAM

135g white chocolate, roughly chopped
50g water
150g caster sugar
120g free-range egg whites, chilled (from about 4 eggs)
3g fine sea salt
2g cream of tartar
250g unsalted butter, cubed, softened
70g full-fat cream cheese, cubed

STEP 1 In a microwave-safe bowl, heat white chocolate in 15-second intervals, thoroughly stirring with a rubber spatula after each burst to prevent burning. Continue for 3–4 minutes, until chocolate turns a golden brown with a toasted caramel aroma. Once ready, cool slightly for 1 minute, then stir vigorously to remove any lumps. Cool to room temperature.

STEP 2 In a small saucepan, combine water and sugar, then gently stir just until sugar is evenly moistened. Set pan on stovetop, ready to heat. Place chilled egg whites, salt and cream of tartar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Begin whisking on medium speed until mixture turns foamy and small bubbles form – this should take about 2 minutes.

STEP 3 Once egg whites are ready, and with mixer running, cook sugar syrup over medium heat, without stirring, until it reaches 115°C. Immediately remove from heat. Increase mixer speed to high, then slowly pour hot syrup into meringue (egg whites should be at soft peaks with fine, smooth bubbles), beginning with a thin stream and gradually increasing flow.

STEP 4 When all of the syrup is incorporated, continue whisking on high speed for another 3–4 minutes as meringue cools slightly. The meringue should turn glossy and hold stiff peaks, and the temperature should be about 35°C. While mixing on high speed, gradually add softened butter cubes one at a time, ensuring each cube is fully incorporated before adding the next.
STEP 5 Once all of the butter is incorporated, continue beating for 3–4 minutes until buttercream changes from a pale yellow to a creamy white, and slightly increases in volume. Once buttercream is whipped to a silky and airy consistency, gradually add softened cream cheese, one cube at a time, while mixing on high. Ensure each cube is fully incorporated before adding the next.
STEP 6 Once all of the cream cheese is mixed into the buttercream, pour in the toasted white chocolate. Continue to whip for an additional 30 seconds, until well incorporated.
STEP 7 Follow instructions (right) on how to assemble your layer cake and crumb coat.

COOK'S TIP

You can purchase cinnamon myrtle online – try **natif.com.au** or **bowerbirdnaturals.com.au**

Project timeline

DAY 1
Prepare the fillings
and bake the cake layers

DAY 2
Prepare the buttercream
and assemble the cake

DAY 3
Decorate the cake

Assemble the layer cake

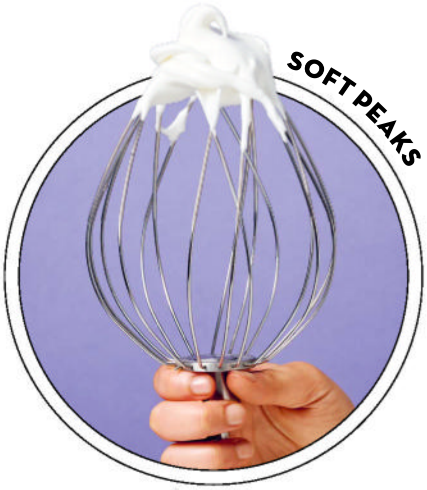
Cake layers, soak, filling and buttercream (see recipes opposite)
Cake leveller
Pastry brush or squeeze bottle
Cake board
Turntable and non-slip mat
Spatula
Angled palette knife
Piping bag

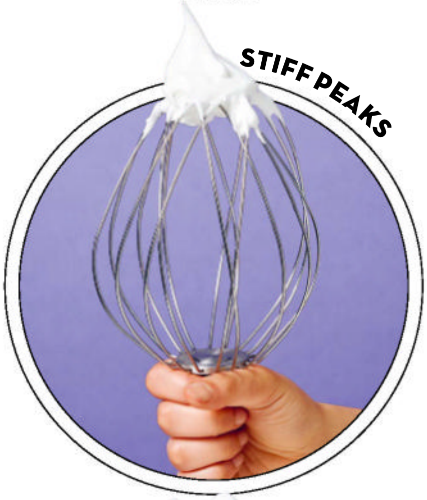
STEP 1 On a flat, level surface, trim top of each cake layer using a cake leveller set to 2.5cm.
STEP 2 Use a pastry brush or squeeze bottle to generously apply soak to exposed crumb side of each layer. Be careful not to overdo it – applying too much soak can make the cake soggy.
STEP 3 Place a cake board in the centre of your turntable, with a non-slip mat underneath the board to keep it steady. Using a cake spatula, add a small dollop of buttercream to the centre of the board to act as an adhesive to anchor the cake in place. Position the first cake layer in the centre of the board with the cut side facing up.
STEP 4 Add a generous dollop of buttercream and spread it evenly with an angled palette knife, using broad strokes while rotating the turntable. Smooth the surface by holding the palette knife parallel to the cake, with its edge lightly touching. Rotate the turntable with slight speed until the top is smooth and buttercream is about 5mm thick.
STEP 5 Fill a piping bag with buttercream. Cut an opening about 2cm wide at tip of the bag. Pipe a continuous, unbroken ring of buttercream around the top edge of the cake. This creates a 'dam' to help contain the filling. It's best to use buttercream with a medium-to-thick consistency for this.
STEP 6 Spread the filling evenly within the buttercream dam, taking care not to overfill. This ensures the cake layers remain stable. Place the second cake layer on top, with the cut surface facing up, pressing gently to ensure the cake adheres properly. Quickly check that the layer is level and aligned straight. Use a straight palette knife to smooth out any excess buttercream from the sides of the cake, as the buttercream will firm up when chilled. Refrigerate cake for about 10 minutes, or freeze for about 5 minutes, to set the layers.
STEP 7 Spread a layer of buttercream, pipe a dam, and add the filling for each additional layer. For the lower layers, always position the exposed crumb side facing up, while the top layer should be placed with the baked surface facing up. This ensures you'll have a flat, smooth surface for the top of your cake.
STEP 8 Once all the cake layers are assembled and set, apply a thin layer of buttercream all over the cake surface to seal in any loose crumbs. This process is called 'crumb coating' – the goal is simply to lock in any loose crumbs.
STEP 9 Allow the crumb coat to fully set in the fridge for at least 10 minutes before moving on to frosting your cake (see page 166).

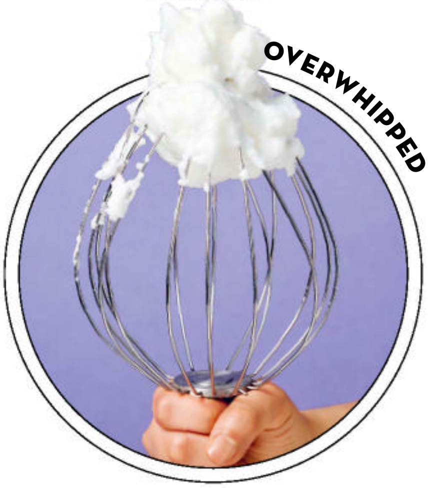
NOTE The cake pictured in the step-by-step guide (see page 164) is from a different recipe in *Mali Bakes*, but the process is the same.

ITALIAN MERINGUE BUTTERCREAM

This buttercream is used to decorate the Retro Love cake. You'll need a mixer bowl with at least a 4.7-litre capacity to make this amount. Avoid buttercream rising above the whisk, as this prevents the meringue being whipped properly.







250g free-range egg whites, chilled (about 8 eggs)
1 teaspoon fine sea salt
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
120g water
360g caster sugar
650g unsalted butter, cubed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

STEP 1 Things move quickly when making buttercream, so have all ingredients weighed and ready to go. Place your chilled egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer, along with salt and cream of tartar. Place bowl in the fridge to chill for at least 15 minutes.

STEP 2 Pour water into a saucepan, then add sugar. Gently stir until all sugar is evenly moistened, making sure there are no dry spots that could cause crystallisation. Use a damp pastry brush to wipe down the side of the saucepan, removing any stray sugar granules. Place on the stovetop, ready to heat, and have an instant-read digital thermometer ready.

STEP 3 Attach the mixing bowl to the stand mixer and begin whisking egg whites on medium speed. Whisk until whites turn foamy with small bubbles forming; this should take about 2–3 minutes. Once the egg whites have reached this stage, begin heating the sugar syrup while keeping the mixer running.

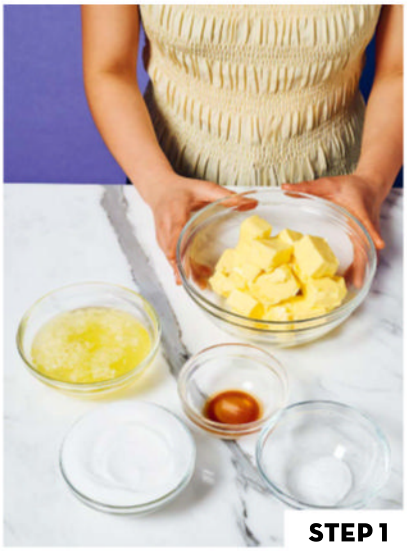
STEP 4 Cook the sugar syrup over medium-high heat until it reaches 115°C. For an accurate temperature reading, keep thermometer centred in the syrup, avoiding the sides or the bottom of the saucepan. The syrup should take about 3–4 minutes to reach the right temperature. Once the syrup is on the heat, don't stir it – this can cause crystallisation. If you see the sugar cooking unevenly, use the pan handle to gently swirl the saucepan to even things out. At first, the bubbles will be small and fast as water evaporates, but as the syrup cooks, the bubbles will get larger and slow down. When you see bubbles start to move evenly across the surface of the saucepan, it's a sign the syrup is cooking properly. Once the syrup reaches 115°C, immediately remove the saucepan from heat.

STEP 5 When the sugar syrup is ready, the egg whites should be at the soft peak stage, with fine, smooth bubbles. Increase the mixer speed to high, then slowly pour the hot syrup into the meringue, beginning with a thin stream and gradually increasing the flow. Aim to pour the syrup between the side of the bowl and the whisk to prevent splattering. Use a heatproof spatula to scrape any remaining syrup into the egg whites.

STEP 6 Keep whisking the meringue on high speed for another 6–7 minutes as it cools slightly. It should turn glossy and hold stiff peaks (see picture, left). When you touch the side of the bowl, it should feel warm, not hot. The meringue should be about 35°C, which means it's ready for the butter to go in. Keep whisking if the meringue still feels too warm. If the bowl starts to feel too full, you can turn the speed down slightly – but only after the meringue has reached stiff peaks. If the meringue cools too much, the butter won't blend in and may leave visible flecks. If the meringue is too warm, the buttercream mixture will become soupy.

STEP 7 While mixing on high speed, gradually add the softened butter cubes one at a time, ensuring each cube is fully incorporated into the meringue before adding the next (I count to five between additions). Once all the butter is incorporated, continue beating for 3–4 minutes, until the buttercream changes from a pale yellow to a creamy white, and slightly increases in volume. This is where the magic happens – air is whipped into the butter, creating a beautifully light and airy buttercream.

STEP 8 Add the vanilla and continue mixing on high speed until fully incorporated (about 10 seconds). Reduce speed to its lowest setting and let mixer run for at least 4 minutes. This leaves it completely free of air bubbles, ready for decorating.



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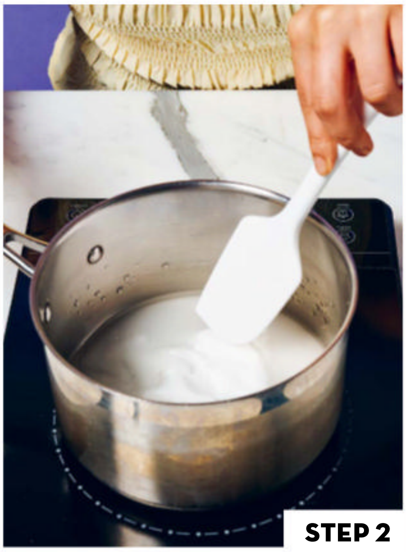

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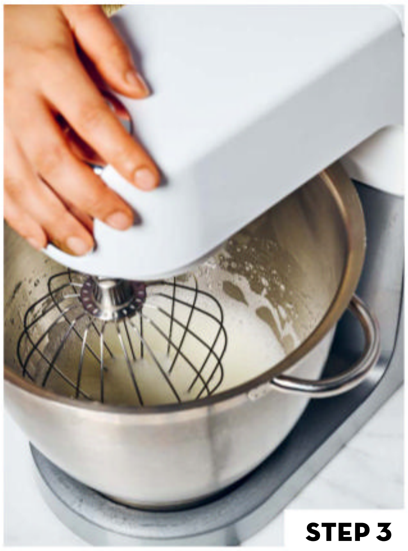

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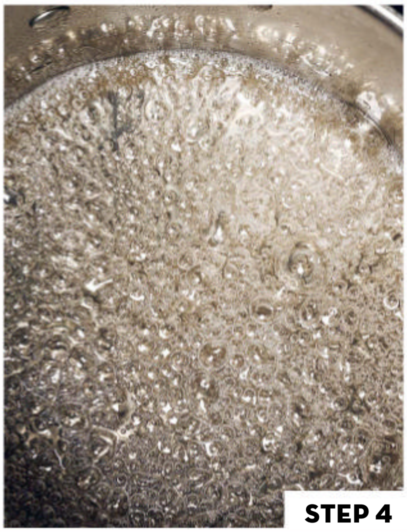

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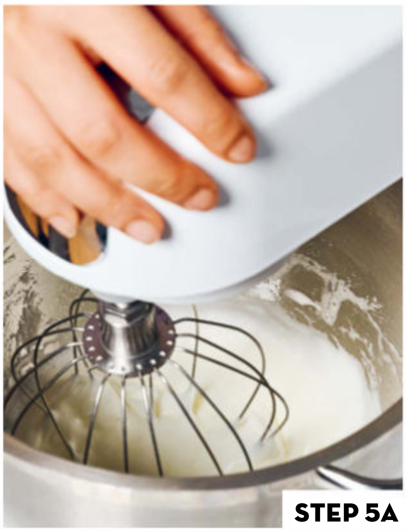
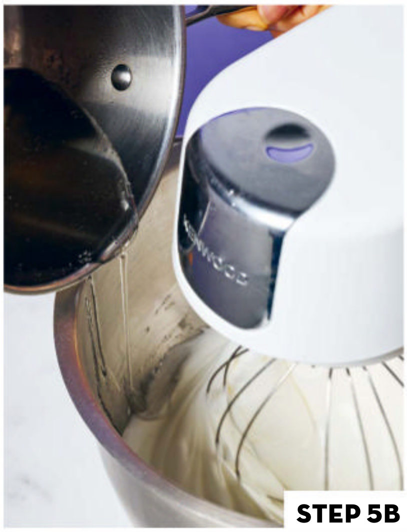


STEP 5A



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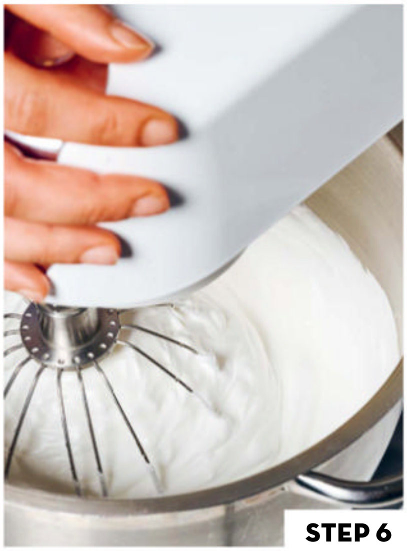

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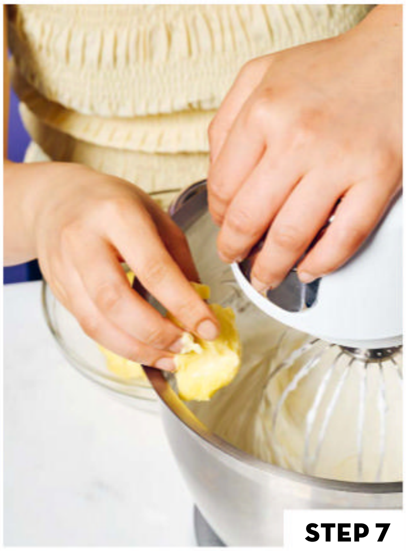

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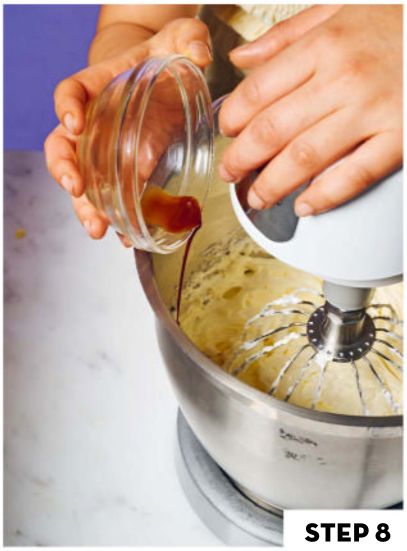
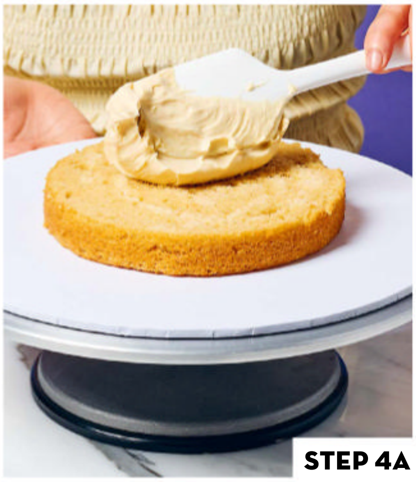


STEP 8

How to layer and crumb coat

Follow these steps and the instructions on page 161 to assemble, fill and crumb coat your layer cake.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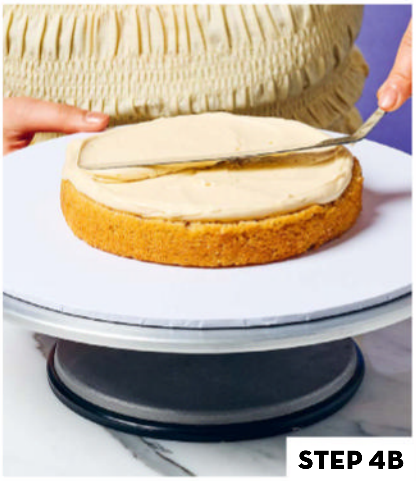
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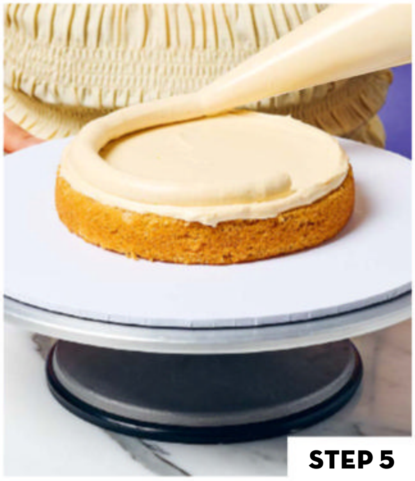
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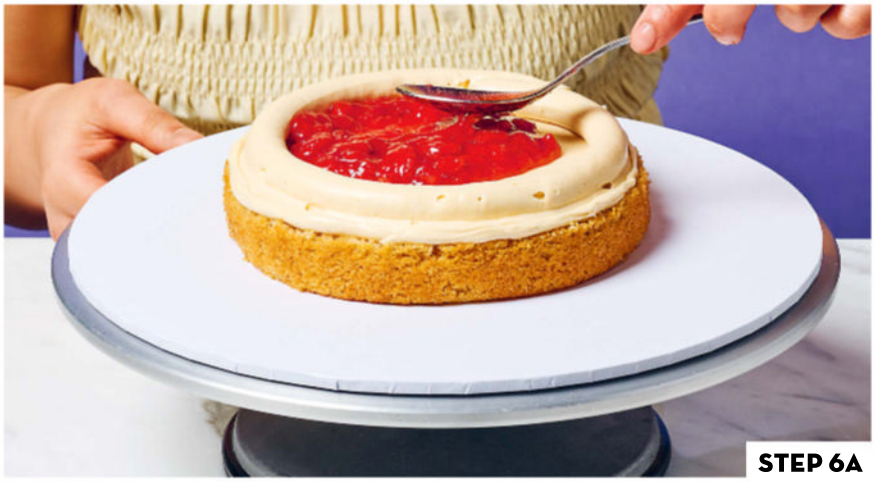
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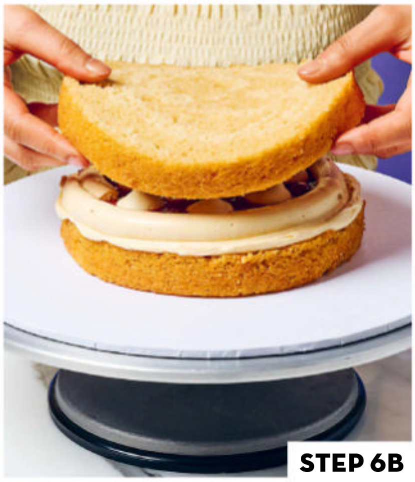
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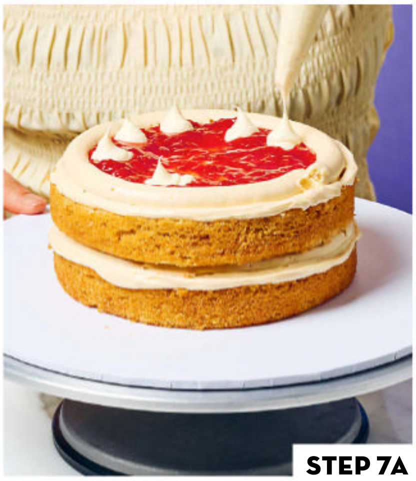
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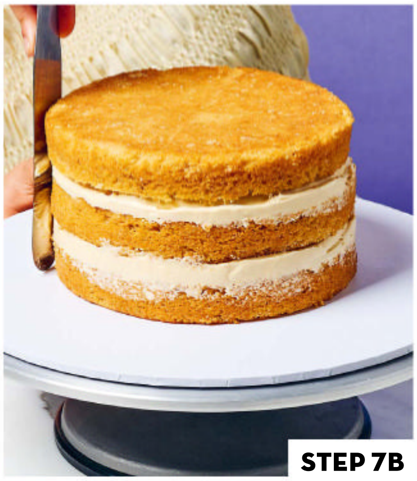
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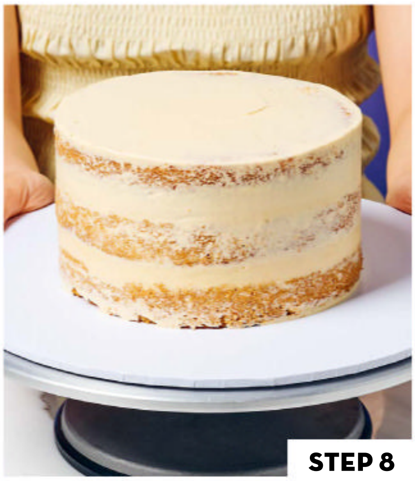
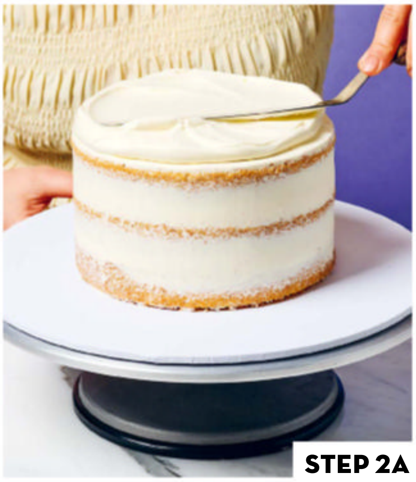

STEP 8

How to frost a layer cake

To frost the crumb-coated cake before decorating, follow these steps and the instructions on page 166.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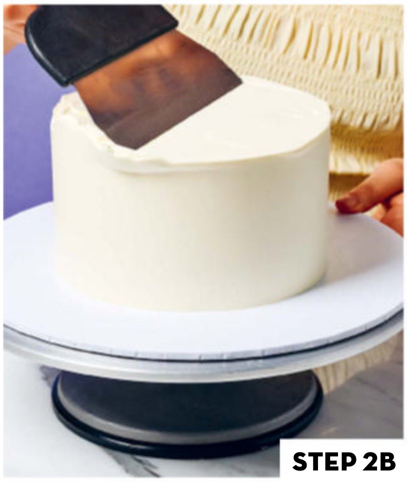
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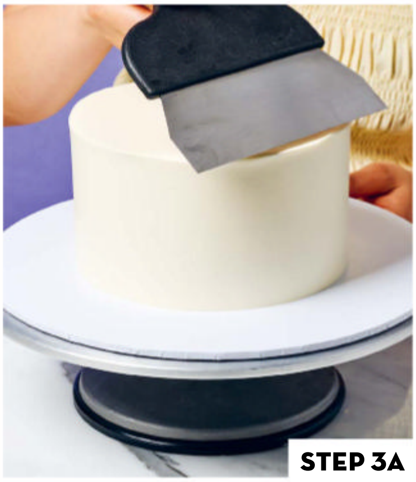
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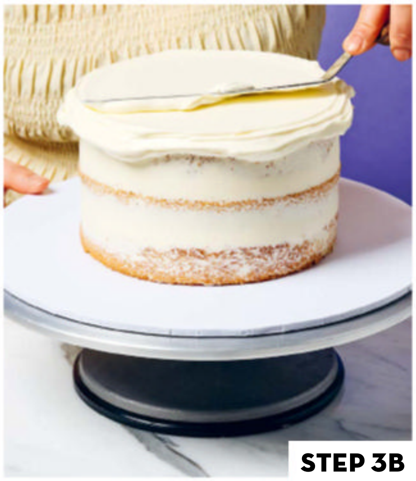
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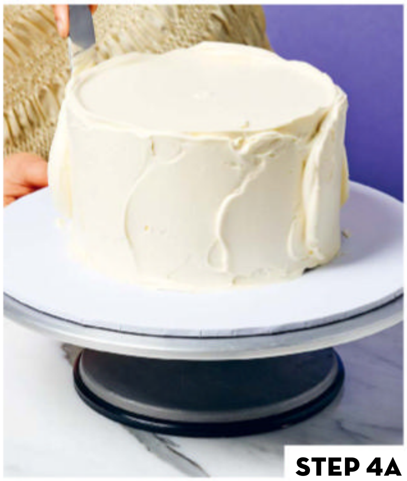
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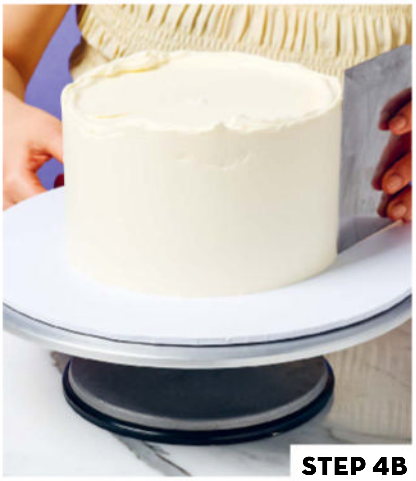
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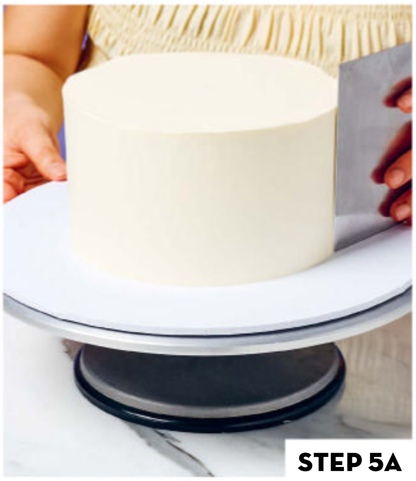
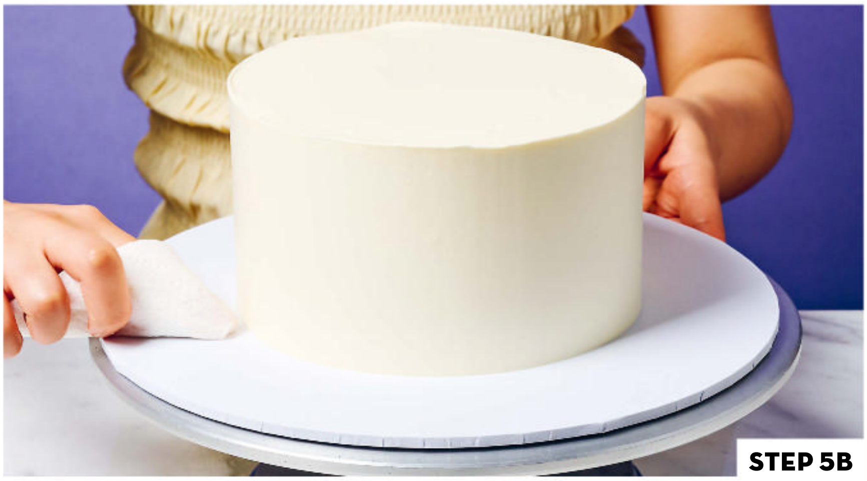

STEP 5A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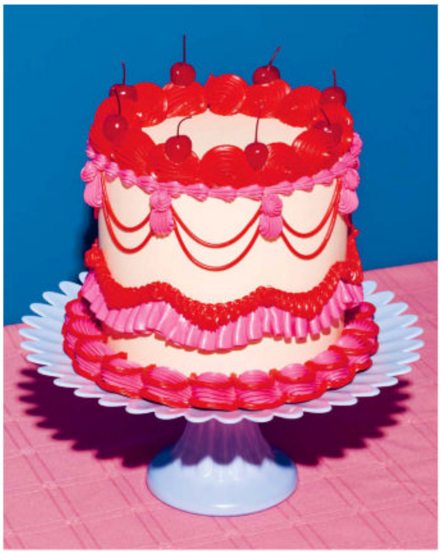


RETRO LOVE CAKE

1100g Italian meringue buttercream (see recipe p162), medium consistency, bubbles removed
Yellow, hot pink, mustard and red food colouring
18cm four-layer round cake, crumb-coated, chilled (see recipes p160)
28cm round cake board, 5mm thick
8 maraschino cherries, with stems

FROSTING TOOLS

Angled palette knife
Straight palette knife
Stainless-steel cake scraper, at least 15cm tall
Bench scraper with plastic handle (for smoothing top of cake)
Heatproof container or jug, taller than the scraper and palette knives
Turntable and non-slip mat

DECORATING TOOLS

Standard round 5 nozzle
Medium French star S/F9 nozzle
Medium petal 126K nozzle
Standard star 16 nozzle
Medium French star S/F13 and S/F5 nozzle
Large French star S/F15 nozzle
3 large piping bags
1 standard coupler
1 medium coupler
1 large coupler
Wing caliper
Small pointed palette knife

TO FROST THE CAKE

(See step photos on page 165)

STEP 1 Tint 300g of the buttercream a soft peachy-beige using small drops of equal parts yellow, hot pink and mustard food colouring. Stir frosting in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water until thin but spreadable. Centre cake on turntable with a non-slip mat under cake board.

STEP 2 Top the cake with two generous dollops of frosting. Use a warm, dry, angled palette knife to evenly spread with broad front-and-back strokes while rotating the turntable. Smooth top by holding the palette knife parallel to the cake. With the edge closest to you just touching the surface and the other slightly raised, rotate to smooth.

STEP 3 Holding a straight palette knife parallel to cake, use long, even strokes to spread frosting around side. Holding a warm, dry scraper parallel to the side with bottom edge resting on the board, slowly rotate turntable. Repeat spreading and scraping until smooth.

STEP 4 Holding a warm, dry scraper level with top surface of cake, gently drag frosting inward, working around cake. After each stroke, use palette knife to scrape off excess frosting.

STEP 5 Carefully scrape the side again if needed. Use a damp, clean paper towel wrapped around your finger to wipe excess frosting off the cake board. Refrigerate for at least 15 minutes until frosting is fully set.

COOK'S TIP

Keep frosting tools in a heatproof container or jug of warm water – this helps the frosting glide on smoothly.

TO DECORATE THE CAKE

(See step photos opposite)

STEP 1 Divide remaining buttercream into two equal portions. Tint one portion pink and the other red.

STEP 2 Cut a piece of baking paper to match the size of your cake by tracing around the cake tin. Fold the paper in half, then into eighths.

STEP 3 Gently place the paper on top of the cake, aligning the edges. Use a pointed palette knife to gently make small marks about 5mm below where folded lines meet the top edge. Gently remove the paper. You'll now have eight even sections marked on the upper side of the cake, ready for the borders.

STEP 4 Set a wing caliper to 7.5cm and measure straight down from each mark on the top edge, creating gentle marks around cake. You'll now have eight even sections marked on lower side, perfectly aligning with the upper ones.

STEP 5 Fit the first piping bag with the standard coupler and round 5 nozzle, then fill halfway with red buttercream. Pipe double drop strings, connecting each marked point to the next around the cake. Let the top string drop about 4cm and the bottom string about 6cm.

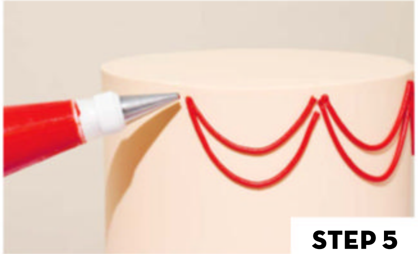
STEP 6 To finish the border, use a second piping bag fitted with the medium coupler and French star S/F9 nozzle, then fill halfway with pink buttercream. Pipe upward shells at each point where the drop strings meet, creating a total of eight shells.

STEP 7 Pipe drop strings with the red buttercream and round 5 nozzle, connecting each lower mark and allowing each string to drop about 2cm.

STEP 8 Switch to the piping bag filled with pink buttercream. Use a medium petal 126K nozzle to pipe fluted ruffle garlands, using outline string as a guide.

STEP 9 Take the piping bag with the red buttercream and switch to a star 16 nozzle to pipe loop garlands along the top edge of the ruffles, concealing the outline string. Use the same nozzle to pipe a small red rosette at each point where the garlands meet. Switch the nozzle on the pink buttercream piping bag to a French star S/F13 nozzle. Pipe a continuous row of pink shells neatly along the bottom edge of the cake.

STEP 10 Take the piping bag with the red buttercream and the star 16 nozzle and pipe a scalloped trim along the bottom edge of the shell border. Then pipe a second scalloped trim along the top edge of the shell border.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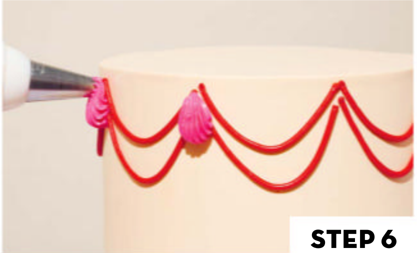
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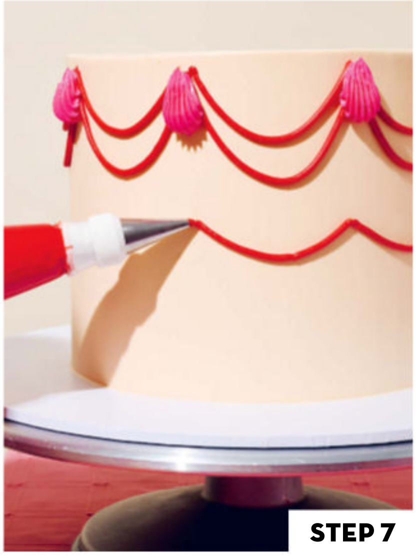
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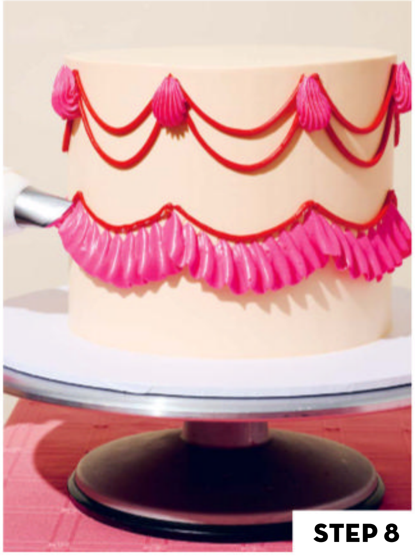
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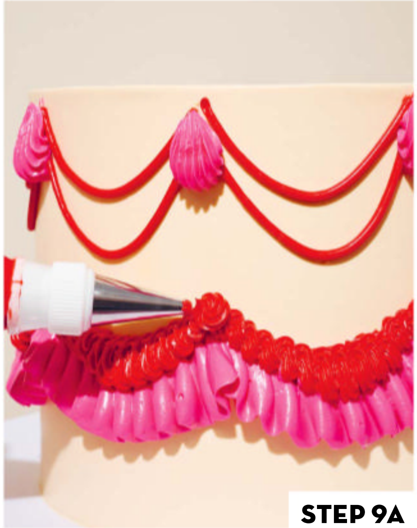
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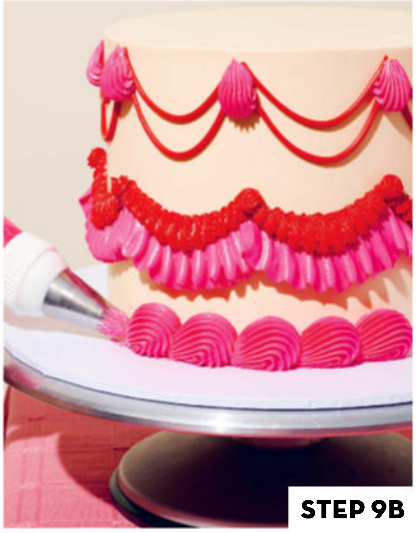
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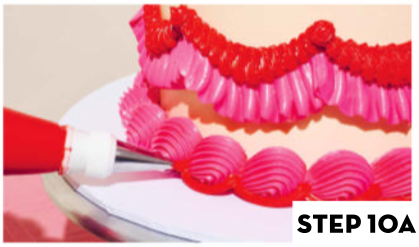
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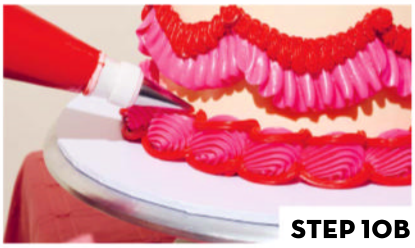
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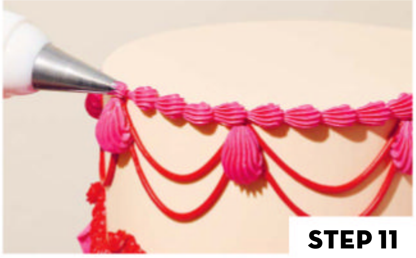
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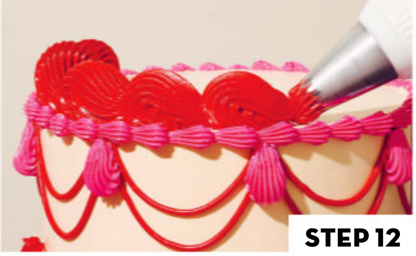
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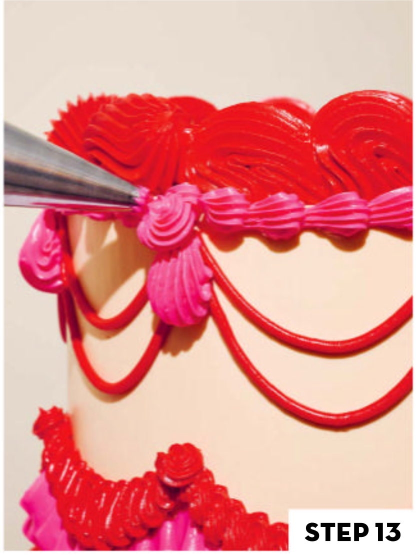
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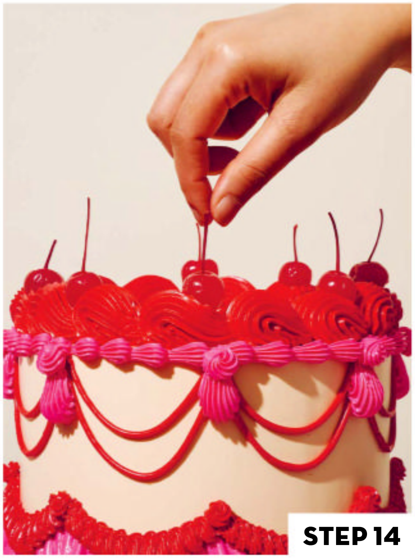

STEP 14

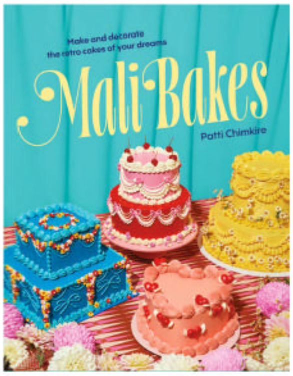
STEP 11 Using the piping bag with the pink buttercream, switch to a French star S/F5 nozzle and pipe a continuous row of small shells around the top of the cake, along the edge.

STEP 12 Fit the final piping bag with the large coupler and a French star S/F15 nozzle, then fill halfway with red buttercream. Working in the opposite direction to the pink shells, pipe a row of large continuous red shells around the top of the cake, as close to the edge as possible. The red and pink shells will be facing opposite directions.

STEP 13 Using the piping bag with pink buttercream and the French star S/F5 nozzle, pipe a small rosette on top of each upward shell, where it meets the pink shell border, to give you eight evenly spaced rosettes around the cake.

STEP 14 Trim off knotty part of each cherry stem, leaving stem as long as possible. Pat cherries dry with paper towel to remove any excess syrup. Once dry, place each cherry along the top red border, spacing evenly around the cake and positioning each one directly above a rosette or at the points where the double drop strings meet.

STEP 15 Refrigerate for at least 2 hours – this helps set the decorations in place so your cake looks picture-perfect!



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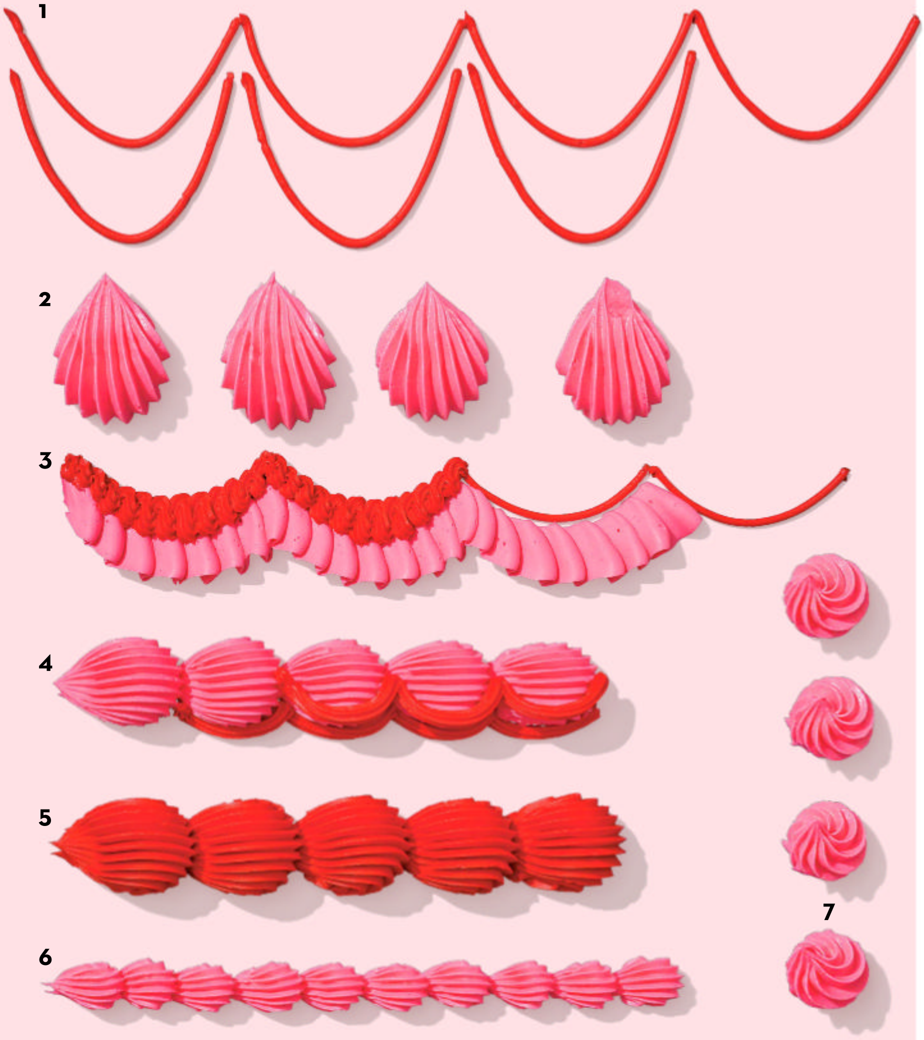
Piping practice



1. **Double drop strings**
   Nozzle: Standard round 5 • **Angle:** 90°
2. **Upward shells**
   Nozzle: Medium French star S/F9 • **Angle:** 45°
3. **Fluted ruffle with loop garland**
   Nozzle (drop string): Standard round 5 • **Angle:** 90°
   Nozzle (fluted ruffle garland): Medium petal 126K • **Angle:** 45°
   Nozzle (loop garland): Standard star 16 • **Angle:** 90°
   Pipe drop string as an outline. Pipe fluted ruffle garland just below drop string, then pipe loop garland on the top edge of the fluted ruffle.
4. **Shell border with double scallop trim**
   Nozzle (shells): Medium French star S/F13 • **Angle:** 45°
   Nozzle (scallop trim): Standard star 16 • **Angle:** 90°
   Add a second scallop trim halfway up the shells.
5. **Large continuous shells**
   Nozzle: Large French star S/F15 • **Angle:** 45°
6. **Small continuous shells**
   Nozzle: Medium French star S/F5 • **Angle:** 45°
7. **Rosettes**
   Nozzle: Medium French star S/F5 • **Angle:** 90° ■

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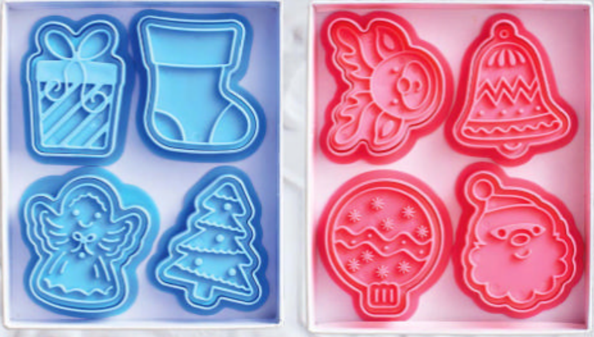
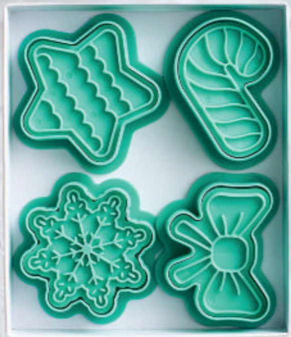
Collect all three sets!

With three sets to collect, you can complete the whole festive suite! Cutters and stamps are only available with our Christmas issue (on sale November 20) in your local newsagents and supermarkets.



Collect our blue and pink packs from participating newsagents

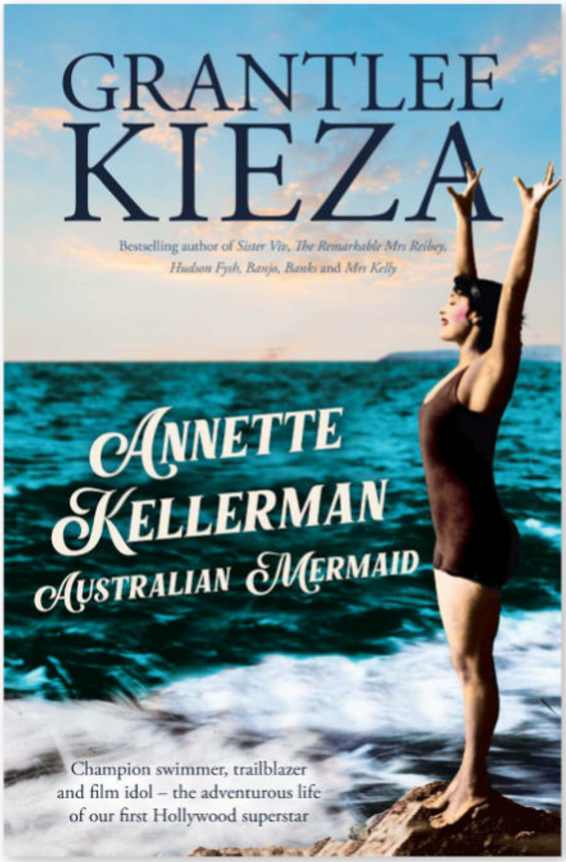


Collect our green pack from supermarkets

better books

[TRAVEL BACK IN TIME WITH RACHEL IORFINO.]

SCAN ME
Scan the code
to shop these
great reads.


GRANTLEE
KIEZA
Bestselling author of Sister Viv, The Remarkable Mrs Reibey, Hudson Fysh, Banjo, Banks and Mrs Kelly
ANNETTE
KELLERMAN
AUSTRALIAN MERMAID
Champion swimmer, trailblazer and film idol – the adventurous life of our first Hollywood superstar

TOP READ

ANNETTE KELLERMAN AUSTRALIAN MERMAID

by Grantlee Kieza, ABC Books, $35.99

Before picking up this book, I had no idea who the real Annette Kellerman was – all I knew was that the Marrickville public pool is named after her. Now she has become my favourite Australian celebrity. Not only was she a film idol, she was a champion swimmer and high diver who defied expectations of women in the 1900s.

Kieza's biography follows Annette Kellerman's colourful life, from a childhood stricken with rickets, to her attempt to swim the English Channel, her Hollywood fame (nude scenes included) and all the way to her quieter life in old age, still promoting good health.

I have never been more impressed with a biography. With so much detail about each facet of Annette's life, this story is completely captivating. I am in awe of this woman's trailblazing attitude and her extreme passion. She was a superstar of her time, and her title of Australia's mermaid is well deserved.

> “THIS BIOGRAPHY IS ANIMATED BY KELLERMAN'S DRIVE, VITALITY AND CHUTZPAH.”
>
> *THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD*

GIVES YOU CHILLS

LAST ONE OUT

by Jane Harper
Pan Macmillan, $34.99

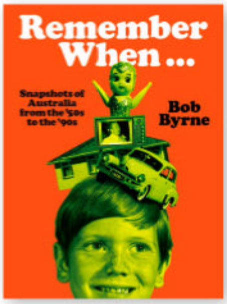
JANE
HARPER
LAST ONE
OUT
NO ONE
STAYS FOREVER

Bestselling author Jane Harper is back with another Aussie thriller that will grip you with fear and absolute heartbreak. With lots of flashbacks and reminiscing, her new novel looks at the troublesome past of a small town on the brink of extinction and uncovers answers to mysteries no-one wants revealed.

PEOPLE'S CHOICE

REMEMBER WHEN...

by Bob Byrne
NewSouth, $39.99

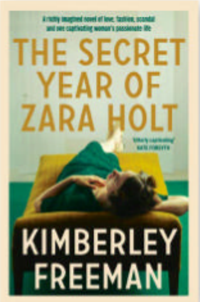

Remember
When...
Snapshots of Australia from the '50s to the '90s
Bob
Byrne

It's lovely to believe that books can take you back in time, and this ode to retro Australia does just that. With beautiful photography of Australia across the mid to late 20th century, you'll feel like you're back in your childhood. It's everything you want when you're feeling a bit nostalgic.

MAKES YOU THINK

THE SECRET YEAR OF ZARA HOLT

by Kimberley Freeman
Hachette, $32.99


THE SECRET
YEAR OF
ZARA HOLT
KIMBERLEY
FREEMAN

Harold Holt is the womanising prime minister who disappeared, but what of his wife, Zara? Kimberley Freeman will take you through a fierce story of endless love, betrayal and scandal between the Holts. The mystery will draw you in, but it's the passion that will keep you reading. ■

Prices are approximate and a guide only.

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Sadly, a bird colliding...
15 hours ago
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16 hours ago
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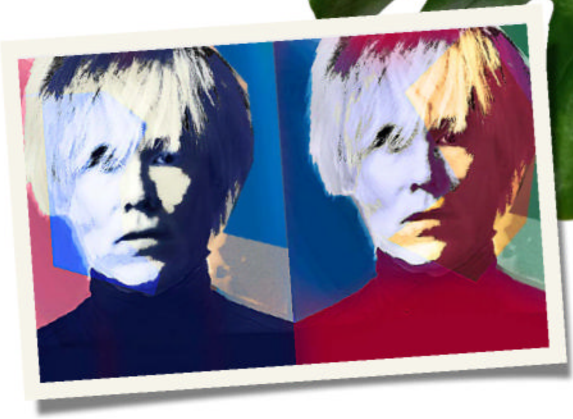
Leafing THROUGH HISTORY

Take a journey back in time and see what indoor plants set the scene and tone of our homes, and which ones are making a comeback.

Words JENNY DILLON

Over the decades, the variety of popular indoor plants has evolved, dictated by trends, lifestyles and economic factors. Indoor plants have also become more popular over time, driven by the growing awareness of their positive impact on our wellbeing. The colour green itself is said to create a sense of calm and generate relaxation. So, while trends come and go, there's always greenery!

The 60s cultural revolution



Baby Boomers were growing up and moving out in the 1960s, creating an anti-establishment cultural and political phenomenon. Design was bold and loud and US artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein were reaching their peaks. The anti-Vietnam War movement took over the streets and campuses, hippie counterculture began in the US, and the UK embraced the Swinging Sixties. Young Aussies quickly followed and, when they weren't protesting or grooving out at music festivals, they were hanging about in share houses where large, loud houseplants echoed their lifestyles.

The big-leafed philodendrons were favourites because of their ability to thrive in low light and with little maintenance. They are statement plants that make a splash in a corner of a room where minimalism is the theme.

The huge, paddle-shaped leaves of the bird of paradise are offset by the bold, geometric shape of its blue, red, yellow and orange flowers. While kaleidoscopic, the mood of the '60s made its description as being psychedelic more apt.

Man landed on the moon in 1969 and excitement in the lead-up spurred interest in *Pilea* 'Moon Valley'. Its dimpled leaves echoed a moonscape with deep craters and valleys. The dark copper veins on its bright green-yellow leaves were also a nod to the sharp lines of fashion and art at the time.

TOP The giant, eye-popping foliage of a philodendron.
ABOVE Andy Warhol.
LEFT The complex structure of the bird of paradise flower.

’70s

The art of hanging out

RAINBOW WARRIOR
GREENPEACE

The crowning of the jet age took place in January 1970 when the Boeing 747 jumbo jet revolutionised long-distance travel for adventurous Aussies. From afar they read of the opening of the Sydney Opera House, a small salve as they came to terms with the break-up of The Beatles. When the Vietnam War ended in 1975, anti-war marchers moved onto the environment as Greenpeace gained momentum.

The death of Elvis “The King” Presley in 1977 resulted in global mourning and the end of the swivel-hipped musical revolution. Disco and punk filled the cultural void.

Things also got a bit ropey when the macramé craze took hold and plants began to hang around as much as their carers. The graceful arching fronds of Boston ferns took on new splendour when hung from macramé baskets. Once all the rage in Victorian parlours, the hanging plant came back into fashion with renewed vigour.

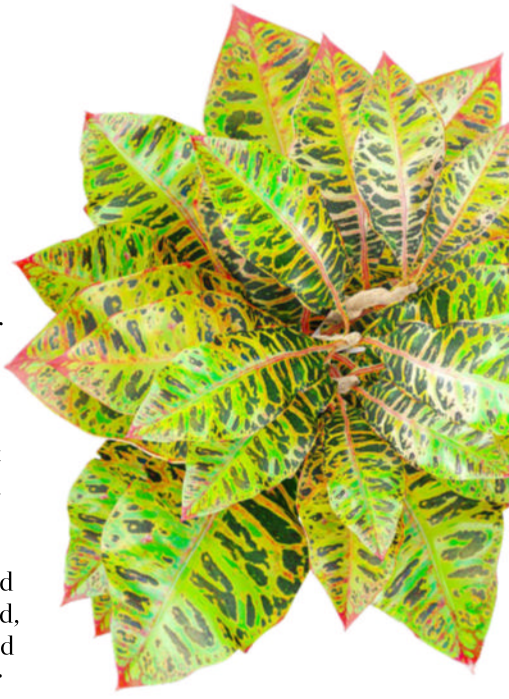
While women were eagerly embracing birth control, the spider plant was having none of it, reproducing itself many times over. Its long trailing stems spiral through the falling foliage with little plantlets at the end.

Hoyas became popular worldwide. An Australian native, its thick glossy leaves can either trail down the sides of its pot, or cling to the ropes of the hanger, producing clusters of white, waxy, perfumed flowers in summer.

TOP The lush, green, feathery fronds of the Boston fern.
ABOVE RIGHT One of the three Greenpeace *Rainbow Warrior* ships.
LEFT The fountain-like foliage of the spider plant comes in a range of colour variations.

80s

Big and bold



This was the era of Australia's bicentenary, the America's Cup and Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. Elsewhere, a new conservatism took hold as Maggie Thatcher and Ronald Reagan became world leaders. Early in the decade a romantic fever broke out when Charles and Diana were married. Another revolution in music occurred as CDs replaced vinyl, MTV was launched, Michael Jackson released his iconic album *Thriller* and the Live Aid concert raised millions for famine relief in Ethiopia.

For Aussies, Kylie Minogue and INXS took over our airwaves. Life got a lot busier for women as more and more joined the workforce and stayed there longer, wearing high-powered, big-padded jackets with bold colours and patterns.

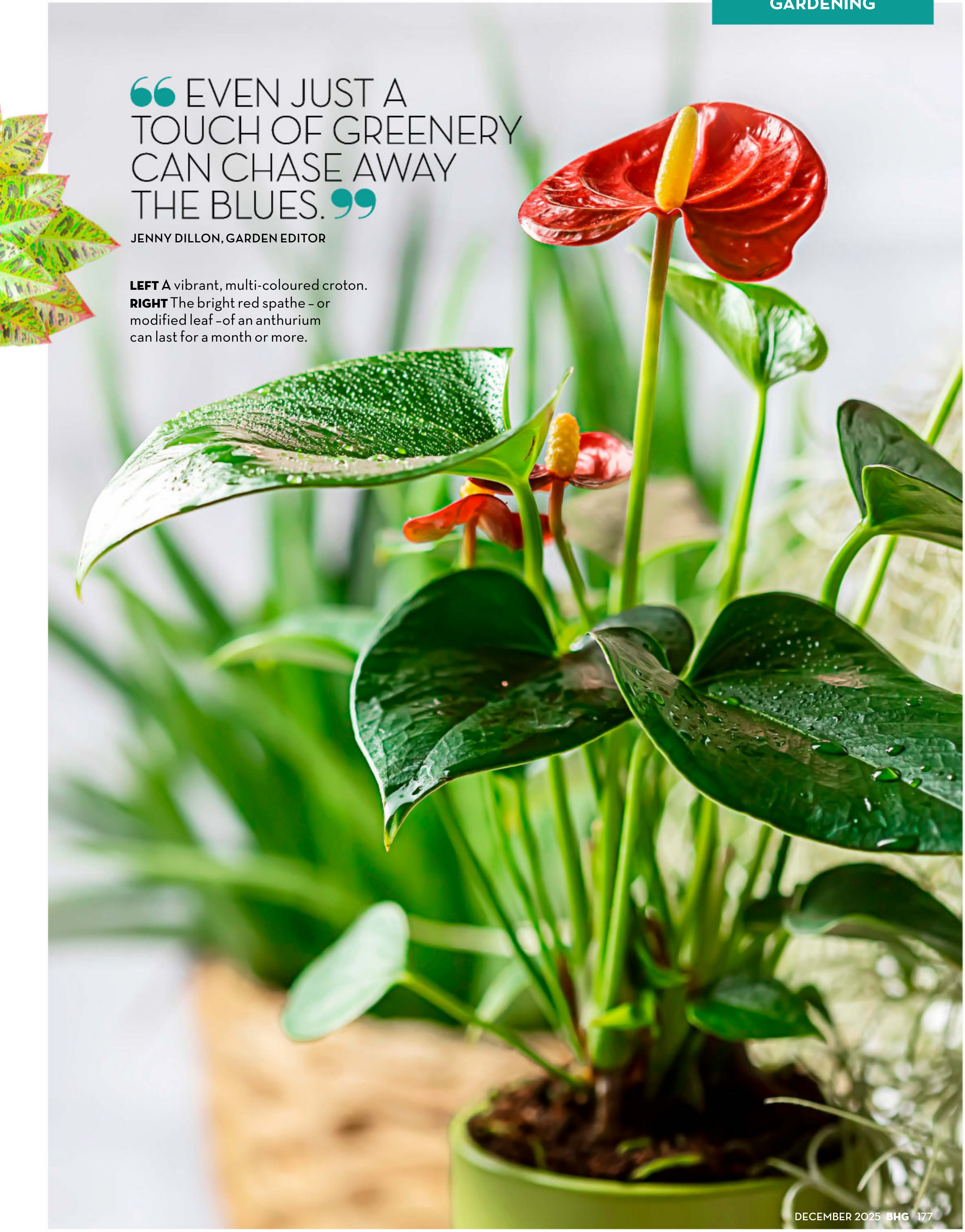
Low-maintenance plants took over as women had less time for gardening, and the trends took their cue from fashion with bolder floral and foliage statements.

The huge glossy leaves of the rubber plant with their velvety underside became ubiquitous in the home and the (more female) office. Super tough and tolerant of a high degree of neglect and low light levels, it can grow into a large indoor tree if given enough space.

Anthurium flowers provided the big, bold colour that reflected the decade. The red, waxy, heart-shaped spathes can last for months if given the right conditions – low but all-day light and plenty of moisture.

Stunning multi-coloured crotons matched the vibrant decor of the time. When positioned close to the sun, the colours in the leaves – a rainbow of rich red, bold gold and energetic streaks of green – intensify. And they are very low maintenance.

FAR LEFT Rise and shine – the rubber plant can grow up to 3 metres indoors.
LEFT Aussie rock band INXS with lead singer Michael Hutchence, centre.



> “EVEN JUST A TOUCH OF GREENERY CAN CHASE AWAY THE BLUES.”

JENNY DILLON, GARDEN EDITOR

LEFT A vibrant, multi-coloured croton.
RIGHT The bright red spathe – or modified leaf –of an anthurium can last for a month or more.

90s Going global

LEFT Daniel Radcliffe, Emma Watson and Rupert Grint brought Harry Potter alive. **RIGHT** Trailing stems of English ivy. **BOTTOM** The beautifully intricate, patterned foliage of Chinese evergreen.

Australians are great adopters of new technology and quickly joined the world by moving on at warp speed with the rise of the internet, personal computers and mobile phones. The world order was turned upside down with the collapse of the USSR and the launch of Amazon and Google. Nelson Mandela became president of South Africa while US President Bill Clinton was impeached.

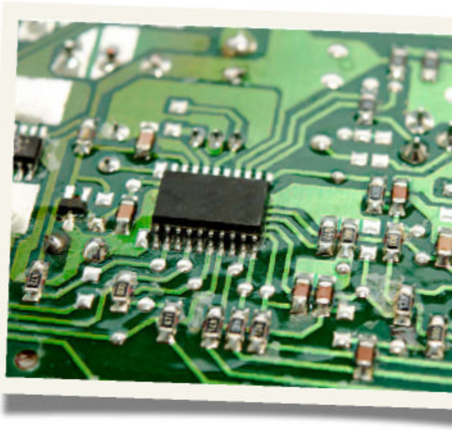
Seattle rock band Nirvana released its groundbreaking album *Nevermind*, and grunge was embraced by Generation X. Across the pond, the Spice Girls pushed the "girl power" movement. Harry Potter cast a spell on children and adults alike, then the world stopped when Princess Diana died. These factors drove a nostalgic sentiment towards houseplants.

Hanging plants made a return and the classic English ivy was popular. While ivy can be invasive when grown outdoors, when inside its exploring ways are constrained but its versatility isn't – it can be trained up a pole or allowed to trail down the side of its pot.

Popular during the Victorian era, the graceful weeping fig also returned as a longing for simpler times grew. Reaching up to 30 metres in its native Thailand, it won't grow past 3 metres when confined to a pot.

The vibrant, patterned foliage of Chinese evergreen also made a splash. It's one of the easiest plants to care for – all it needs is low light and humidity with regular misting.

00s Culture goes click



The world woke up on January 1, 2000, having got through the so-called Millennium Bug – or Y2K – which threatened to bring down computer systems globally.

While we survived our fair share of global drama, Sydney lit up the world with the Olympics. The iPhone and Facebook were launched, and by the decade's end in 2010, Australia's first female governor-general, Quentin Bryce, had sworn in our first female prime minister, Julia Gillard.

We braced through 9/11, wars, a global financial crisis and an obsession with reality TV, all while figuring out what social media even was.

Amid all the ups and downs, our houseplants grounded us, responding to our need for more beauty and stability in the world.

If anything was going to distract you it would be a huge fiddle-leaf fig, demanding space – and attention – in a corner or alcove. But the imbalance of its oversized, leathery leaves on skinny trunks is nothing compared to the fit it throws if exposed to a breeze, air conditioning or too much watering.

Life's turmoils were soothed by the presence of succulents, in so many shapes and colours, with little care and attention needed. Think snake plants, zz plants, cascading strings of pearls or even the dangerous-looking monkey tails.

Finally allowed into Australia from Taiwan in 2011, exotic moth orchids came by the planeload. Their long-lasting, wing-like blooms on arching stems soon became an elegant highlight of our indoor gardens.

Now that we have the luxury of online shopping and extensive nurseries, our homes are filled with monstera, pothos, peace lilies and more – reflecting all the growth we've made over the last 60-plus years.

TOP A computer circuit board. **LEFT** Fiddle-leaf fig trees can sprout again from their trunks if you cut them back when they get too tall. **BELOW** Succulents store water in their leaves, so can tolerate a bit of neglect. ■

Images Adobe Stock, Alamy, Getty Images, Movie Pix

Jenny Dillon
Garden editor

In your GARDEN

The new green growth makes everything in the garden feel so fresh!

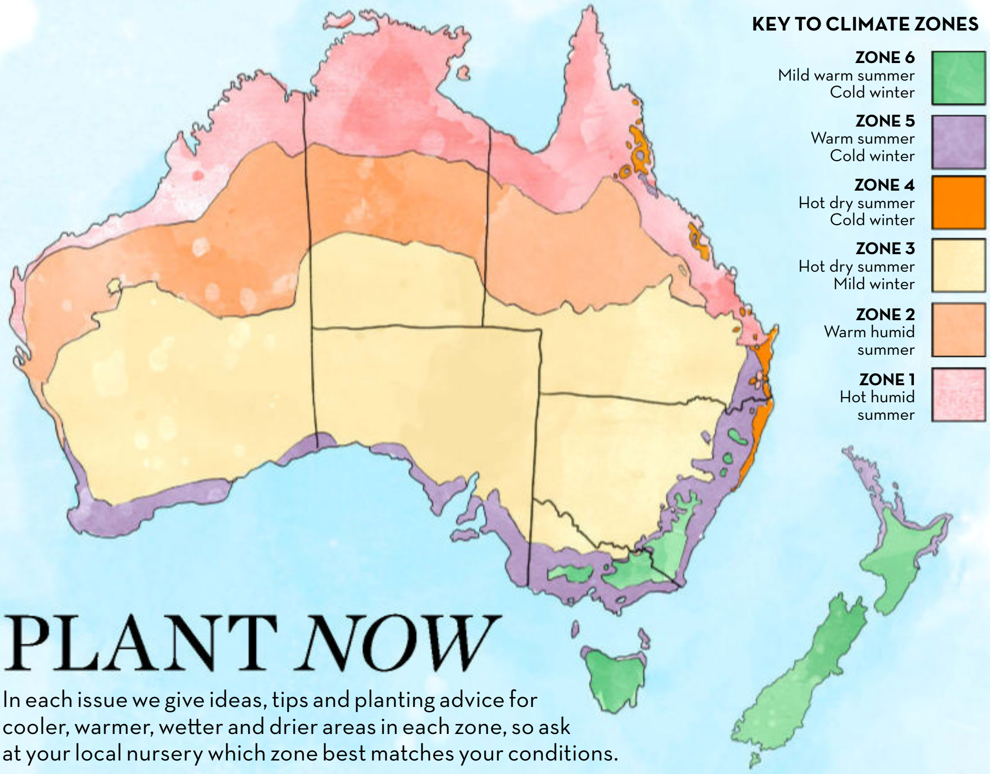
SEASON SPECIALS

Warmer weather brings out some cool flowers.

GOLDEN BLOOMS
Santolina loves hot, dry summers and thrives in infertile, sandy soils.

SHOW TIME
Geum's showy flowers stand out on wiry stems from spring to summer.

DAINTY BUT TOUGH
Butterfly-like gaura flowers tolerate extreme heat and drought.

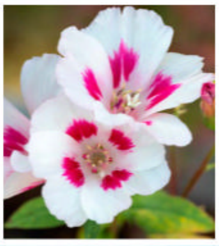


KEY TO CLIMATE ZONES

ZONE 6 Mild warm summer Cold winter	🟩
ZONE 5 Warm summer Cold winter	🟪
ZONE 4 Hot dry summer Cold winter	🟧
ZONE 3 Hot dry summer Mild winter	🟨
ZONE 2 Warm humid summer	🟧
ZONE 1 Hot humid summer	🟥

PLANT *NOW*

In each issue we give ideas, tips and planting advice for cooler, warmer, wetter and drier areas in each zone, so ask at your local nursery which zone best matches your conditions.



FLOWERS

ALL ZONES Ageratum (top left), amaranthus, cosmos, dahlia, marigold, petunia and zinnia. **ZONES 1-3** Balsam, celosia and vinca. **ZONES 4-6** Aster, candytuft, cleome, cornflower, dianthus, godetia (bottom left), impatiens, nasturtium, snapdragon and verbena.

VEGETABLES

ALL ZONES Asparagus, beans, beetroot, capsicum, carrot, chilli, cucumber, lettuce, pumpkin, squash, sweetcorn, tomato and zucchini. **ZONES 1-3** Cabbage, garlic, globe artichoke (top left), radish and sweet potato. **ZONES 4-6** Broccoli, brussels sprouts (bottom left), leek, potato and turnip.

Photography Tony Fawcett, Adobe Stock

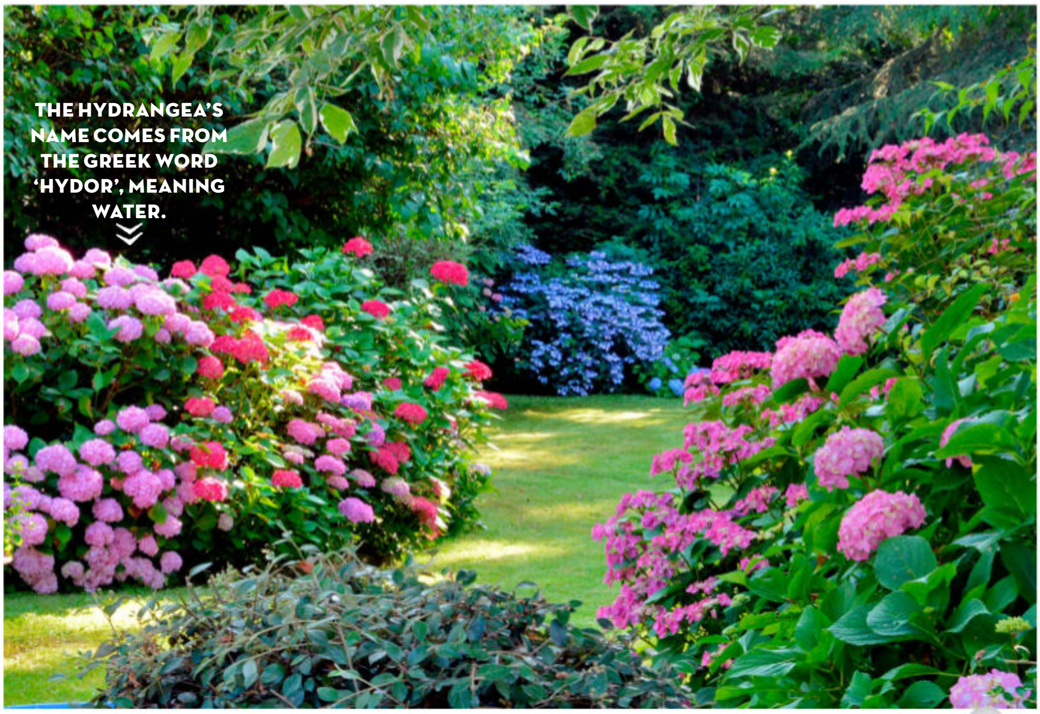
BOUGAINVILLEA FLOWERS ARE TINY AND WHITE INSIDE THE VIBRANT BRACTS.

> “Just living is not enough ... one must have sunshine, freedom and a little flower.”
>
> HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN, DANISH AUTHOR

NAKED DIFFERENCE

CARMINE CUTIES

If you have naked ladies (*Amaryllis belladonna*) lazing at the bottom of your garden, it’s odds on they will be pinkish. Yet for a blast of late summer/autumn colour, it’s worth trying the lesser known carmine ladies. Just like their more familiar sisters, these beauties are born survivors. So long as drainage is good, they cope in the toughest conditions. Known as naked ladies because blooms appear on bare stalks, they also come in red, white and shocking pink.



THE HYDRANGEA’S NAME COMES FROM THE GREEK WORD ‘HYDOR’, MEANING WATER.

GARDEN *SECRETS*

How to grow the best bloomin’ hydrangeas.

1

ALL TASTES

There’s a multitude of hydrangeas around – small, cone-shaped, open-faced, climbers, tender and not so tender ones. Follow the label instructions.

2

COOL CUSTOMERS

The best flowering hydrangeas grow in humus-rich soil in coolish spots with morning sun, protected from hot afternoon sun and watered regularly.

3

TIMELY SNIP

Some hydrangeas flower on old wood, some on new. Cut back old wood by a third in autumn, and new wood to above a pair of plump buds in late winter or early spring.

LACECAP HYDRANGEA

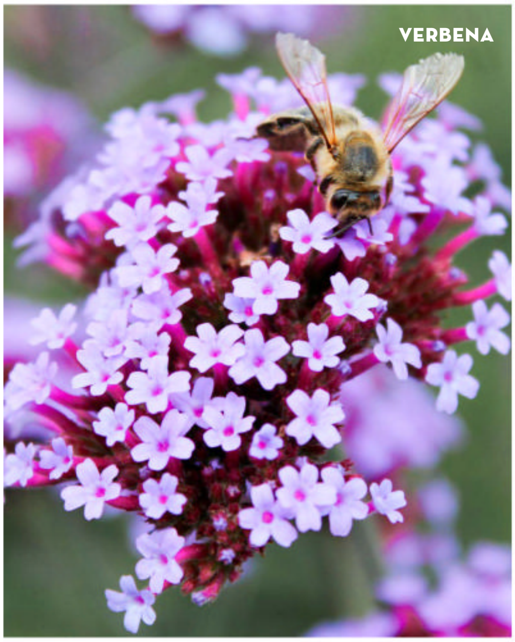
GARDENING ADVICE

◆ **PRIME** your garden for a showy Christmas to New Year with an all-over application of general fertiliser and a light prune back. ◆ **DEADHEAD** spent roses to encourage new blooms. ◆ **FERTILISE** ferns with half-strength liquid fertiliser and cut away dead fronds. ◆ **INCREASE** echeveria and sempervivum numbers by pulling away the “pups” of new plants that form around their base. ◆ **REVITALISE** pond plants by adding aquatic fertiliser tablets to pots. ■

Milton Black
Astrologer

MOON guide

Garden according to the phases of the moon with Milton Black.



Milton's tips for Sagittarius season

(Nov 23 to Dec 21)

Sagittarians are independent people who need plenty of space and freedom to express their outgoing nature. Their ruling planet, Jupiter, corresponds to the colour purple, and their gardens are usually full of a variety of trees, shrubs and flowers – the more the better. Sagittarians flood their gardens with verbenas, dianthus, zinnias, hydrangeas, wisteria, rhododendrons and Japanese maples. Fresh vegetables out of the home garden are a must, as are fruit trees. Sagittarians love sport and being outside, exploring and adventuring. As natural extroverts, they can be great hosts and especially like an outdoor party.

CAPRICORN
SAGITTARIUS
SCORPIO
LIBRA
VIRGO
GEMINI
TAURUS
ARIES
PISCES
AQUARIUS

ZODIAC SIGNS

The 12 signs of the zodiac are divided into four groups – fire, air, earth and water.

Fire signs
Aries and **Sagittarius** are in harmony with all fruit. **Leo** is in harmony with nuts and all seed-producing crops.

Earth signs
Capricorn and **Taurus** are in harmony with all root vegetables that produce crops below the ground, including garlic. **Virgo** is in harmony with all herbs.

Air signs
Libra, Aquarius and **Gemini** are in harmony with plants that produce flowers and perfumes.

Water signs
Cancer, Scorpio and **Pisces** are in harmony with above-ground crops, including trees, shrubs, lawns, and leafy, juicy and fleshy vegetables.

- ♐ Sagittarius
- ♑ Capricorn
- ♒ Aquarius
- ♓ Pisces
- ♈ Aries
- ♉ Taurus
- ♊ Gemini
- ♋ Cancer
- ♌ Leo
- ♍ Virgo
- ♎ Libra
- ♏ Scorpio

DECEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
	1 Moon in Aries ♈	2 Moon enters Taurus 1.12pm	3 ♉	4 Moon enters Gemini 12.48pm	5 Full Moon in Gemini 9.13am	6 Moon enters Cancer 11.54am
7 ♋	8 Moon enters Leo 12.48pm	9 ♌	10 Moon enters Virgo 5.20pm	11 ♍	12 Last Quarter Moon 6.51am	13 Moon enters Libra 2.04am
14 ♎	15 Moon enters Scorpio 1.51pm	16 ♏	17 ♏	18 Moon enters Sagittarius at 2.38am	19 ♐	20 New Moon in Sagittarius 11.43am Moon enters Capricorn 2.52pm
21 ♑	22 ♑	23 Moon enters Aquarius 1.51am	24 ♒	25 Moon enters Pisces 11.08am	26 ♓	27 Moon enters Aries 6.01pm
28 First Quarter Moon in Aries 5.09am	29 Moon enters Taurus 9.57pm	30 ♉	31 ♉			

1 Solid number means plant all **ABOVE**-ground crops during the moon's **WAXING** cycle.

1 Hollow number means plant all **BELOW**-ground crops during the moon's **WANING** cycle.

How to use the calendar

🟨 **Best days**

🟥 **Second-best days**

On these days, thin out seed boxes, sow seeds and plant seedlings that produce their crop above the ground.

These include peas, beans, corn, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, eggplant, lettuce, celery, silverbeet, spinach, endive, Chinese cabbage, tomato, cucumber, asparagus crowns, artichoke, marrow, pumpkin, capsicum, melon, zucchini, chicory, sprouts, rhubarb and herbs (except garlic).

You can also plant out flowering shrubs, annuals, flowers (not bulbs), cactus, tree ferns, flax, passionfruit vines and kiwifruit.

Plant fruit trees and trees that produce edible nuts, such as almond, macadamia, pecan and walnut. Grapes and banana can also be planted.

Take cuttings from established trees and shrubs, and propagate. This is also a good time for planting trees and climbers, and sowing new lawns.

🟩 **Best days**

🟫 **Second-best days**

On these days, sow seeds and plant seedlings that grow their crops below ground, such as carrot, parsnip, radish, beetroot, onion, leek, swede, turnip, sweet potato, seed potato, yam, cassava, garlic and ginger.

This is a good time to plant flowering bulbs or bulbs for propagation and development rather than flowers. Also, plant bare-rooted trees to develop root growth, and refurbish established lawns.

A favourable time for transplanting all types of established trees, shrubs, ferns and bulbs.

☐ Weed and lightly feed. Water with seaweed-type products only.

🟪 Destroy or spray weeds, pests and noxious growth. Cut lawns, do heavy pruning and clear rubbish – don't plant or transplant anything.

Prepare soil and fertilise garden beds for future planting; spread and make compost. Feed all established plants, shrubs and lawns, then water in. This is the best time for dethatching or coring lawns.

🟦 Do not plant or transplant anything, as the moon is adversely aspected with the sun.

Times are in Australian Eastern Standard Time, AEST. This applies to NSW, the ACT, Qld, Vic and Tas. For SA and NT, deduct half an hour. For WA, deduct two hours. During Daylight Saving Time, add 1 hour. **Any questions?** Email milton@miltonblack.com.au ■

Photography and illustration Adobe Stock, Getty Images

better gardening

[NEWS, PRODUCTS AND TRENDS.]

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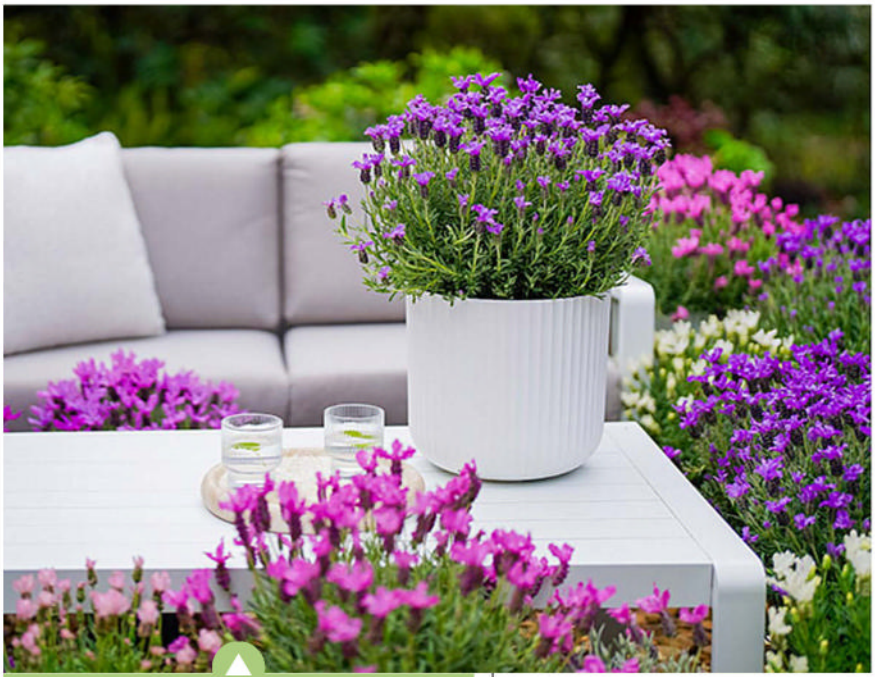
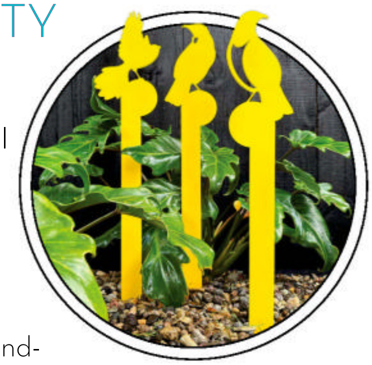
Scan this QR code to shop these items.



ON THE WING

TWEETY TRIO



Add some Kiwi appeal to your garden's native bird population with these New Zealand-made stakes. Sold in a set of three – including a fantail, tui and kererū – they are made of powder coated, UV-resistant aluminium, stand 45cm tall and are about $135 a set (NZ$149) from LisaSarah; **lisasarah.com**.

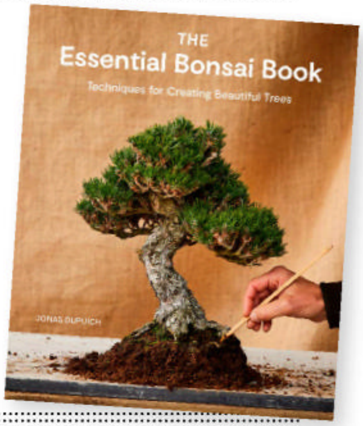
HAIL THE KING

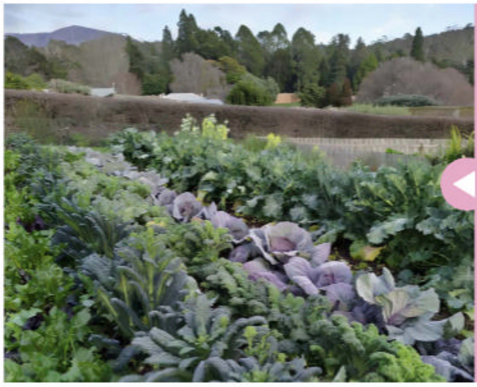
First there was Aussie-bred *Lavandula* 'The Queen' lavender. Now she's joined by the equally striking *Lavandula* 'The King' with large purple bracts. Part of the Lavinnova range, it's low maintenance and boasts a neat dome habit. Getting to 80cm wide, it's frost and dry tolerant, right for pots or open garden, and even performs well in full shade; **lavinnova.com.au**.

LITTLE GEMS

Bonsai beauty

Want to be a bonsai master? There's all you need to know in **The Essential Bonsai Book: Techniques for Creating Beautiful Trees** by US expert Jonas Dupuich (Clarkson Potter/Ten Speed, $44.99). A lavishly illustrated paperback, it covers the best plants to use, wiring, repotting, fertilising and mistakes to avoid.





WHAT'S ON?

Vice-regal vegies on show

Tasmania's Government House in Hobart opens on December 4 for vegie tragics to take a 1½-hour tour of the produce patch. Including the vice-regal orchard, flower picking, the French gardens and citrus collection, the tour also visits the garden's chooks, claimed as Tasmania's happiest. Tickets are at trybooking.com (search for "Garden Produce Tour"), with proceeds going to Government House Estate for maintenance and preservation. ■

Prices are approximate and a guide only. Due to the printing process, colour reproduction is a guide only.

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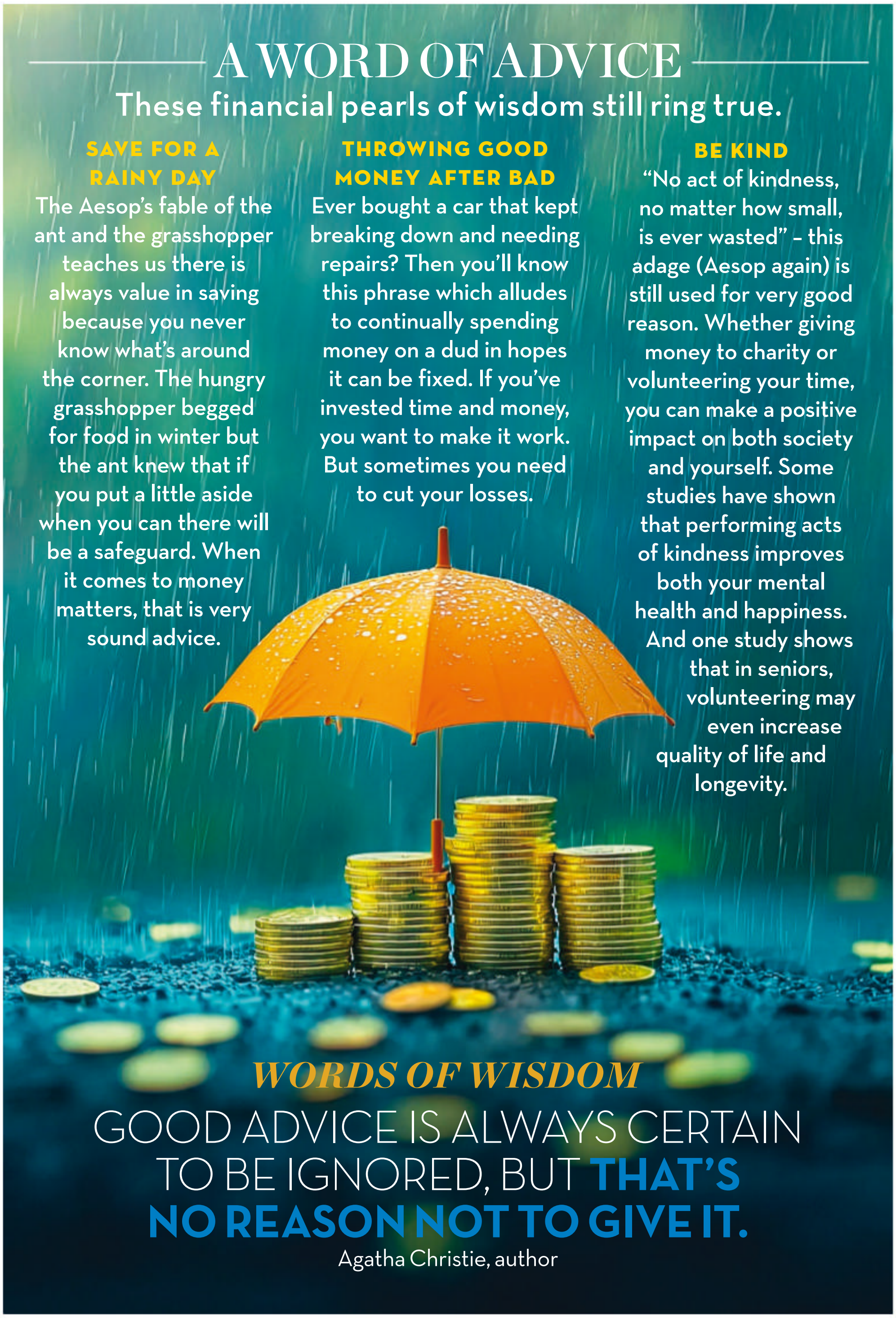
better finance

[ANDREA BLACK FINDS THE TRUTH IN OLD SAYINGS.]



A WORD OF ADVICE

These financial pearls of wisdom still ring true.

SAVE FOR A RAINY DAY

The Aesop's fable of the ant and the grasshopper teaches us there is always value in saving because you never know what's around the corner. The hungry grasshopper begged for food in winter but the ant knew that if you put a little aside when you can there will be a safeguard. When it comes to money matters, that is very sound advice.

THROWING GOOD MONEY AFTER BAD

Ever bought a car that kept breaking down and needing repairs? Then you'll know this phrase which alludes to continually spending money on a dud in hopes it can be fixed. If you've invested time and money, you want to make it work. But sometimes you need to cut your losses.

BE KIND

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted" – this adage (Aesop again) is still used for very good reason. Whether giving money to charity or volunteering your time, you can make a positive impact on both society and yourself. Some studies have shown that performing acts of kindness improves both your mental health and happiness. And one study shows that in seniors, volunteering may even increase quality of life and longevity.

WORDS OF WISDOM

GOOD ADVICE IS ALWAYS CERTAIN TO BE IGNORED, BUT **THAT'S NO REASON NOT TO GIVE IT.**

Agatha Christie, author

This financial information is general in nature and does not take into consideration your personal circumstances. If you need advice, please seek out a licensed financial adviser.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR COLLECTABLES

RESEARCH VALUE

From family crockery to your vinyl records, research what these items are worth. Check eBay for similar items, and get coins and jewellery professionally assessed.

GET THEM INSURED

Now that you know what your items are worth, insure them with your home and contents cover. Document what you have with photos, descriptions and appraisals.

MAKE THEM LAST

Make sure your precious keepsakes are stored in a cool, dry area away from direct sunlight and humidity. Periodically clean, as needed. ■

Photography Adobe Stock

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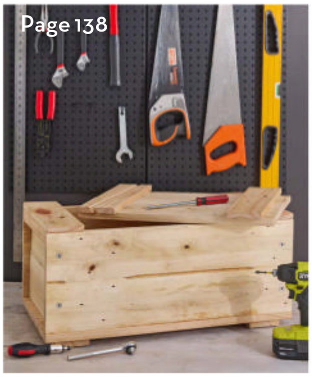
RSPCA

better stockists

[PLANNING A TRIP TO THE SHOPS? HERE'S OUR ROUND-UP OF PRODUCTS]



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TOP SHELF, PAGE 66

Project supplies

Bunnings 140 x 19mm DAR pine 3-metre length, $29.20 (you'll need three). Zenith 10G x 35mm Type 17 wafer head timber screws, 50 pack, $15.86. Feast Watson Oak Prooftint Interior Stain, 50ml, $12.90. **Tramin Building Supplies** 30 x 30mm pine DAR H3, 5.4-metre length, $18.93 (you'll need three).

PICTURE PERFECT, PAGE 70

Shopping details

Kmart Picture frames, from $6. **Porter's Paints** Assam Tea eggshell paint, $159.90/4L. **Unsplash** *A Bouquet* by Henriëtte Geertruida Knip from Europaena. Butterfly and caterpillar images from the British Library. Venice photo by Adrian Nogura.

Project supplies

Spotlight Fiskars Premier 9" Dressmaker Shears, $55. Gorilla Glue clear spray adhesive, 396g, $33.

GROWING MEMORIES WITH GRAHAM, PAGE 114

Project supplies

Bunnings Seasol 10L Seed Raising & Cutting Potting Mix, 10L, $7.39. Yates Plant Cutting Powder, 15g, $7.11. Mr Fothergill's 8cm coco coir pots, 22 pack, $12.98, or 11cm, six pack, $5.98.

BOX OF TRICKS, PAGE 138

Shopping details

Bunnings Black metal pegboard (900 x 450mm), $45. Pegboard hooks, 20 pack, $18.

Project supplies

Bunnings Gorilla wood glue, 236ml, $15.62. Buildex 14G x 75mm Class 4 bugle batten screws, 25 pack, $11.85. Ryobi four-piece countersink drill bit set, $9.98. PowerFit 40mm C1 series electro-galvanised brad nails, 2000 pack, $8.44. Cabot's 250ml matt oil-based Cabothane Clear polyurethane timber varnish, $15.50. ■

Prices are approximate and a guide only.

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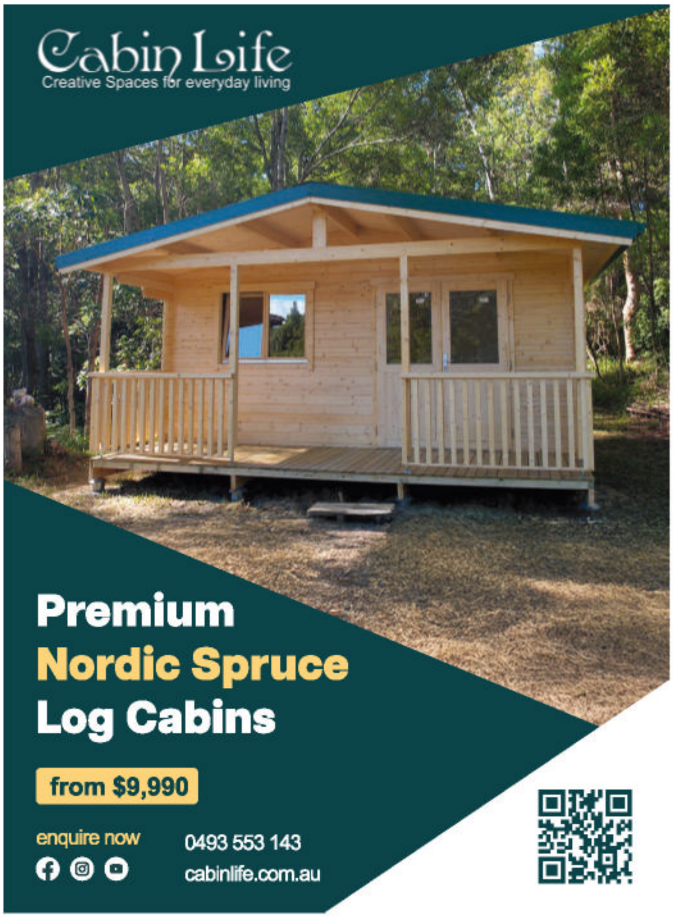
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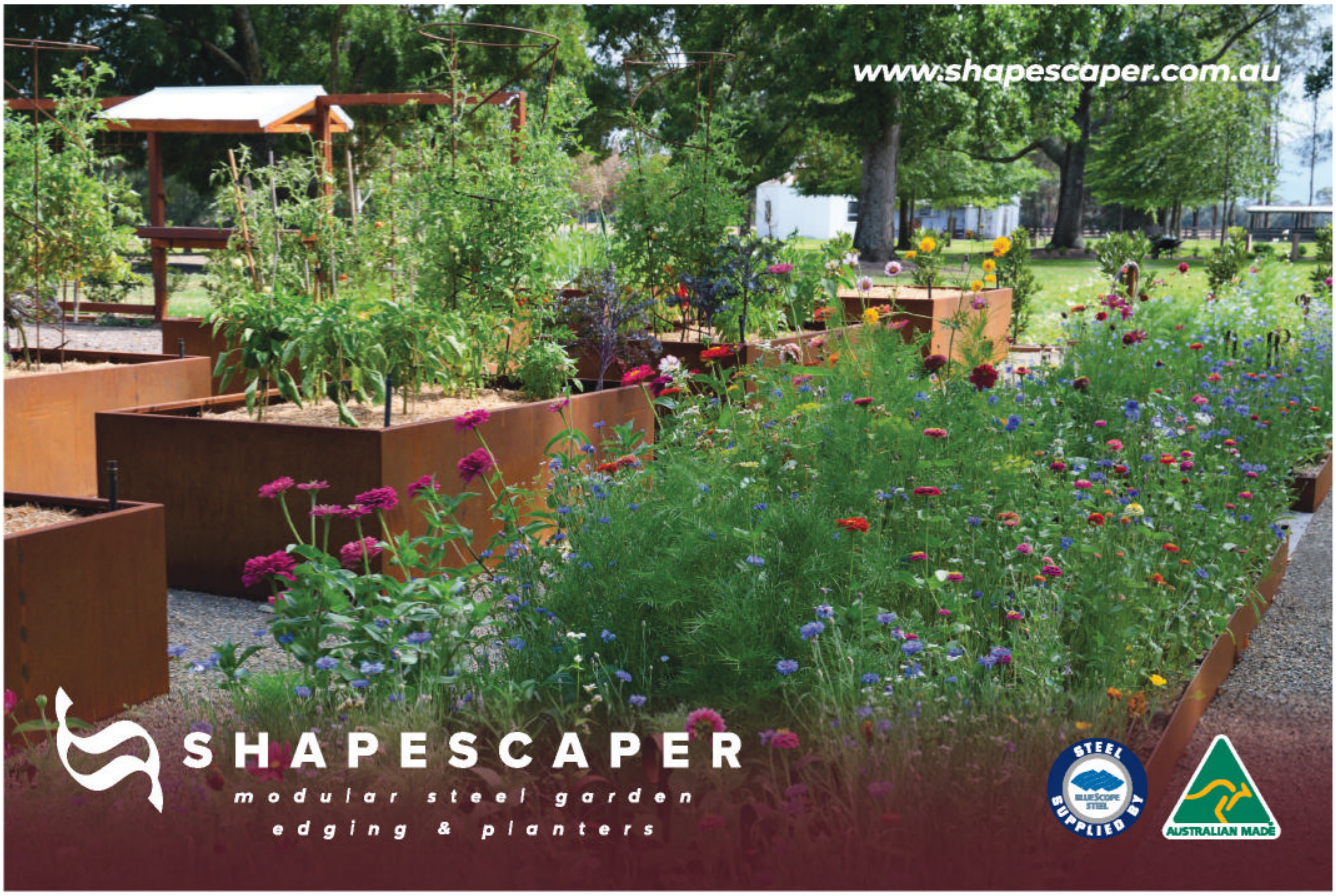

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[SEE HISTORY COME TO LIFE WITH RACHEL IORFINO.]

1

Port Arthur, Tas

TICKETS FROM $53 (ADULT), $26 (CHILD)

Port Arthur, a 90-minute drive from Hobart, is Australia's most intact convict site. Wandering through its more than 30 historic buildings and taking a scenic (but spooky) harbour cruise will help you understand its dark history. The wide-open grounds offer plenty for families to enjoy as well.

2

Old Dubbo Gaol, Dubbo, NSW

TICKETS FROM $24.50 (ADULT)

If you're interested in Australia's criminal history, head to Old Dubbo Gaol, which operated from 1847 to 1966. You'll see a hangman's kit, the frightening dark cells used for solitary confinement, and learn prisoners' stories from immersive displays and guided tours of the site. Want to feel even more spooked? Then book an after-dark tour!

MDCCCL
XXXVII
OLD DUBBO GAOL

3

Rail journeys with Journey Beyond, NSW

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Journey Beyond is known for its epic rail adventures on The Ghan and Indian Pacific, but it also has five-day Vintage Rail Journeys in NSW. You can explore the Hunter region, travel on the Riverina Rail or find hidden gems on the NSW North Coast on fully refurbished heritage trains. Sit back with a glass of champagne and enjoy the view.

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4

Sovereign Hill, Ballarat, Vic

TICKETS FROM $52.50 (ADULT)

Experience Australia's vibrant gold rush years at Sovereign Hill near Ballarat. You can tour old mines, learn 1800s crafts such as candle-making, and pan for gold. From watching Redcoat soldiers parade to trying out an old trade, this experience is one for the whole family. ■

Want more history?

If your dream home involves a grand staircase, an interesting backstory and lots of lace doilies, then a historic home is your ideal day out. Check out our travel story on page 130 for the best historic houses to visit in Australia.

SCAN ME
Scan the QR code for more information on these journeys back into history.

Prices are approximate and a guide only.

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AUSTRALIAN® Seniors
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From green burials to gallows humour, near-death experiences to end-of-life planning – nothing about death is off the table.

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